HISTORY & ARCHITECTURE

Rock Island's Modernistic Architecture

ROCK ISLAND
ILLINOIS

Rock Island's Modernistic Architecture

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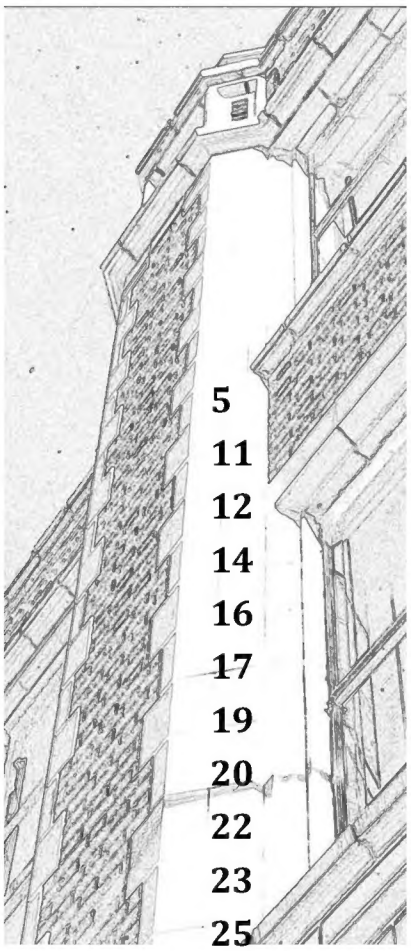

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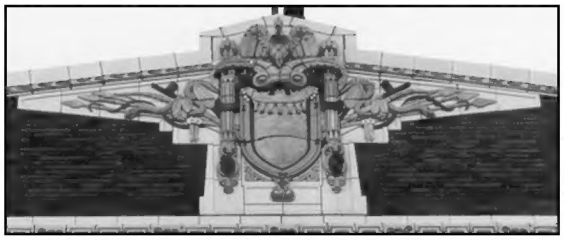
ROCK ISLAND'S MODERNISTIC ARCHITECTURE

Introducing Art Deco and Art Moderne, The Modernistic Styles

The term "Art Deco," which also encompasses the later phase of the style termed "Art Moderne," was coined in 1968 as the title of a book by Bevis Hillier about the decorative arts of the 1920s and 1930s. The term comes from the title of an important international exhibition of decorative and industrial arts that was held in Paris in 1925 called: *l 'Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes*. It was not used to describe the decorative works displayed at the exhibition at this time or in the era in which the style was so popular. In this period, contemporary design was usually referred to as Art Moderne in France and Moderne or Modernistic in the United States. While the term "Art Deco" does not necessarily encompass the entire array of forces at work in the arts in the era between the two world wars, it is a useful phrase for the character of much of the decorative arts output during this era.

The antecedents of the decorative arts of the post World War I era came from all over Europe, as well as the United States. These forerunners were often unrelated and contradictory forces in the world of art at the turn of the century, but Hillier's "Art Deco" is still the best descriptive phrase for the decorative arts output in the years between the World Wars. Some of the major contributors to the arts and design movements leading up to the Art Deco era were: architects LeCorbusier, Walter Gropius, and Frank Lloyd Wright; fine furniture maker Emile Jacques Ruhlman; Viennese and German designers whose work was manufactured by the Wiener Werkstatte; designers Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Josef Hoffman, Edgar Brandt; artist Aubrey Beardsley, and the analytic geometry of the Cubists and the Cubism art movement.

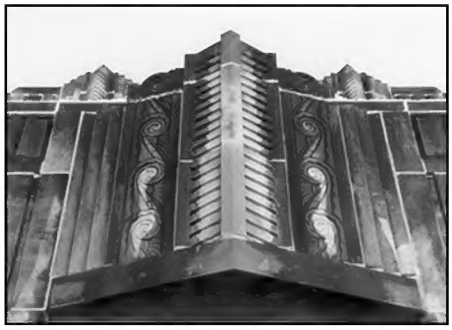


Jill Doak

Multi-colored terra cotta at Fort Armstrong Theatre.

Alastair Duncan in his book *American Art Deco*, maintains that Art Deco is based on two key movements that dominated the decorative arts in Europe and later in the United States. The first of these started in the early years of the 20th century in Austria and Germany. It was based on Germanic logic and geometry, in contrast to the curves and flowers of the Art Nouveau movement in France. It emphasized functional design applicable to mass production. This movement was the basis of the Art Deco decorative arts in the United States in the late 1920s. Its clean, angular lines resulted in it being labeled at the time as "Modernism."

The second major decorative movement, the one most often associated with Art Deco today was the playful and colorful style that was so popular in Paris after World War I. It was more an extension, instead of the antithesis of the Art Nouveau style, which post World War I artisans had set out to eradicate. It was a self-indulgent, decorative style designed for luxury and leisure — evocative of the "good times" of the *Roaring Twenties.* The French aspect of the Art Deco came to the United States before the more austere Austrian/German form of the style, which later influenced the Art Moderne phase of the Deco era.



Jill Doak

Rock Island High School has angular lines above the entrance to the little theater.

In sum, Art Deco is a distinctly modern style which developed in the 1920s and reached its high point in the 1930s. It was inspired by various sources, including those mentioned above, as well as the Russian Ballet, and American Indian and Egyptian art and architecture. Shortly after 1930, another influence affected modernistic styles — the beginning of streamlined industrial design of airplanes, ships and cars. The smooth surfaces, curved corners and horizontal emphasis of industrial design affected the modernistic era, giving rise to what is often termed Art Moderne. In commercial buildings, both the vertical, zigzagged Art Deco as well as the horizontal, streamlined Art Moderne influences occur together. However, in residences, the streamlined Art Moderne influences predominate. Some examples also resemble the contemporaneous International style, in which

decorative detail was minimized.

Typical decorative elements of the style included human figures either in the nude or semi-nude state, floral motifs, the antelope and greyhound, and depictions of the sun, moon and earth; suggestions of speed are shown either as such items as a plane, ship or rocket, or as a decorative motif. Also, a variety of geometric shapes and lines can be found in the design of many objects and buildings. The cube, triangle or pyramid, and stepped or zig-zagged lines are common. Other decorative motifs include crescent or half-moon shapes made into rainbows or fans, and many other shapes such as a diamond, cylinder, oval, square and octagon were employed as well.

Eric Wala

Minimized detail at the Thoms House

Also noticeable in the Art Deco movement were many different construction materials, including ceramic, glass, ivory, marble, metals, wood and metal alloys, plastics and other synthetics. Art Deco reflected the demands of the machine and some of the newer materials mentioned above. The ultimate aim of the movement was to stem the age old conflict between industry and art, in part by making artists skilled at crafts, and by making design fit mass production requirements.

The Origins of Art Deco

This section of the booklet provides additional information about the background and origins of the Art Deco period that flourished in the era between the two World Wars. The origins of Art Deco are found in the trends occurring in the last decade of the 19th century. In England during this decade, the era of conventional morals and accepted good manners began to go by the wayside. After 50 years of Queen Victoria's influence, the time was ripe for change. Oscar Wilde's insouciant plays were greeted with delight, and his new aesthetics were masterfully visualized by artist Aubrey Beardsley's decorative motifs.

A group of artists in Glasgow were impressed with Beardsley's original style and under the leadership of designers such as Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Beardsley's ornamental motifs were used to decorate furniture, metalwork, posters and textiles. In addition to buildings, Mackintosh designed furniture, carpets, curtains and cutlery. So his buildings had a stylistic integrity throughout, which became one of the important hallmarks of Deco interiors.

In 1900, the Glasgow group participated in a furniture exhibition organized by the Vienna Secession. The term "secession" was used by artists in several German cities and Vienna who rebelled against the official dictates of the artistic establishment. Two young architects, who were founding members of the Vienna Secession, exhibited a preference for the clean lines which were found in the work of Mackintosh and his Glasgow associates. Joseph Maria Olbrich designed the Secession's exhibition building, a design featuring cubic shapes surmounted by wrought iron laurel branches. Josef Hoffman used an even more stark geometry in his furniture designs and metalwork. A silver-gilt tea service which he designed in 1904 displays a curvilinear elegance that definitely foreshadows Art Deco.

In 1903, the Wiener Werkstatte was formed to make and sell works designed by artists of the Vienna Secession. Its most important commission was the Brussels mansion of a Belgian coal magnate, which it built and furnished. Hoffman designed the house, as well as the garden, furniture, the lighting and the cutlery. Other Werkstatte artists had a hand in the decoration of the house which was not completed until 1911.

At the turn of the century, many leading architects and designers embraced modern technology and new materials. Reinforced concrete, aluminum, ebonite, plate glass and linoleum were all employed by Olbrich's and Hoffman's mentor, Otto Wagner, in the Post Office Savings Bank (1904-12). In the new era of automobiles, elevators, telephones, and electrical appliances, historical architectural styles seemed by many designers to be inappropriate. The need for a new style was especially acute in the United States, a country where historical art forms were an anachronism.

During the 1890s, Chicago architects were beginning to design large commercial buildings, almost entirely without ornament. Also, at this time Frank Lloyd Wright was developing a style of domestic architecture devoid of reference to past architectural styles.

By 1900, the year of the Paris Exhibition and the zenith of Art Nouveau, groups of designers in Europe and the U.S. were working in a distinctive style. Instead of the irregular curvaceous forms of Art Nouveau, they employed a simple geometry with ornament, that, if used at all, was contained, stylized

and purposefully flat. Artists at the turn of the century were trying to achieve a style that would not be seen as a revival of historical design styles.

Behind the desire of many designers to arrive at new solutions to problems was the realization that the arrival of the 20th century made it imperative to leave behind 19th century forms. This was not purely an artistic whim, since life in Europe and the United States in the 1890s was undergoing rapid change. Also, the advances made in the technology of communications had a major impact on the visual arts. Beautifully printed art magazines such as *The Studio* publicized the work of a broad array of architects, designers and craftsmen — all of which helped to disseminate new developments in the applied arts. Every innovation helped to spawn others with a wide range of styles merging into what would become Art Deco.

In France, designers who had promoted Art Nouveau designs abandoned the style and looked in new directions. Rene Lalique gave up making Art Nouveau jewelry and turned to the manufacture of glass. In 1908, Francois Coty, the perfumer, asked Lalique to design scent bottles, all of which led to the famous glass pieces that Lalique turned out in the 1920s and after. He also created Coty's circular cardboard face powder box. Still in use today, it is covered in a design of powder puffs in orange and black, gold and white.

Eric Wala

Art Deco details on Royal Neighbors building.

Another event that led up to the Art Deco era was the Russian ballet, which Serge Diaghilev brought to Paris in 1909. The ballet's bright colored, exotic costumes and lush scenery appeared to fit right in with the styles being promoted in the decorative arts of the day.

Another French artisan, Jacques Ruhlman, created quite a stir with his furniture that was exhibited in Paris in 1913. It was created from exotic woods that were inlaid with ivory and ebony. His furniture, as well as contemporary pieces influenced by it, appear regularly today in high fashion magazines such as *House Beautiful* and *Architectural Digest*, a tribute to the longevity of early Art Deco designs.

So, by World War I, the basic characteristics of the Art Deco style were in place, all based on the new social and technological trends that gave rise to the style. Thus, the design world was ready for the famous Paris exhibition in 1925.

The Paris Exhibition of 1925: Art Deco's Launch Pad

While the seeds of Art Deco were sown by a number of designers and artisans prior to World War I, it was the 1925 *l 'Exhibition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes* that truly launched the Art Deco style in architecture and all of the decorative arts. Robert Benfils, a French painter, was one of the organizers of the 1925 Paris Exhibition and designed a poster for it and the cover of its official catalog. Shown on the catalog's cover are a leaping deer, a running lightly clad female figure and a basket of flowers — all standard design elements of Art Deco.

Due to the work of well known designers and artisans such as those mentioned previously, the characteristics of the new style being adopted in France during the postwar years were likely known by the Exhibition's sponsors, as well as others knowledgeable in the arts. Thus, Art Deco emerged as a full blown style at the Exhibition.

The site of the Exhibition was in the heart of Paris, with various countries setting up pavilions to house their respective displays. In addition to France, countries such as Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, England, Greece, Holland, Italy, Japan, Poland and Russia were represented. Two major countries did not participate. Germany was not invited due to its strained relations with France. The United States did not accept the invitation because it was felt that there was no modern art in the country.

Three names recur often in the Exhibition's official catalog: Edgar Brandt (metalwork artisan), Rene Lalique (glass designer), and Jacques Ruhlman (fine furniture maker). Brandt's masterpiece in 1925 was the main entrance to the Exhibition by the Grand Palais. The Pavilion Lalique was decorated with glass bas reliefs and inside were glass pieces ranging from drinking glasses to scent bottles. Lalique also fashioned work for other pavilions, including glass panels, obelisks, and even an entire room with a coffered glass ceiling. And the furniture of Jacques-Emile Ruhlman was considered the best of Art Deco. He displayed his wares in his own pavilion, which was modeled on the house he commissioned for himself

from the architect Pierre Patout. In it he surrounded outstanding examples of his furniture with objets d'art from the studios of other artisans. Other important firms to exhibit in 1925 included the goldsmiths/ silversmiths Christofle; porcelain maker Sevres, and glass maker Baccarat.

The pavilions at the Exhibition displayed a richness of materials, a wide range of shapes and decorative motifs. Visitors were offered all types of products to decorate their houses in the Art Deco fashion, from dinner plates and cushion covers, to complete suites of furniture. Furniture was often lacquered and veneered with exotic woods; glass was enhanced with bubbles or metal foil inserts; pottery was covered with a crackled white glaze making the colored decorations that were applied over it sparkle. The oval and octagon were often used, as well as lithe figures. Fruits and blossoms appeared densely on ornamental bands or geometric shapes. Formalized sunbursts and fountains were employed in textiles as well as wrought iron. Other favorite motifs were leaping deer and greyhounds.

The 1925 Exposition encompassed the decorative art world at the time and profoundly influenced the field of design for years to come. While the styles and designs displayed at the Exhibition were not all alike, they showed that Art Deco had become an established international style. In future years, the styles shown in 1925 were used as inspiration for other artisans but not copied slavishly. The Exhibition also served as the basis for the development of the "modern" look of the decorative arts over the following generation.

Some purists say that Art Deco ended in 1925, with the peak of the style culminating in the Paris Exhibition. Others make a distinction between "Art Deco" and "Art Moderne," with Art Deco including design up to 1925 and Art Moderne describing styles that followed after that year and on into the 1930s. This sort of division separates the aspects of the elegant style following Art Nouveau from the basically angular and stark designs brought forth in the late 1920s. However, in architecture, components of both the elegant Art Deco designs as well as the angular forms can be found.

Art Deco In America and The Midwest

While America was an ideal arena for the new styles of Art Deco and modernism, they were slower to take root here than in other places in the western world. Only when the Deco language was transformed into something more typically American did it take root and spread. And by the late 1930s, it had become the first unified American design trend.

In the early 20th century, the upper and middle classes in the U.S. had very conservative tastes. The only basic exceptions to the conservative nature of American design at this time were in the Arts and Crafts movement, and in the works of Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Comfort Tiffany — all heavily influenced by the design trends in Europe.

However, in the 1920s, interest in contemporary European design began to grow in this country. Exclusive shops featured European furniture and wealthy Americans began to buy French Deco furniture as well as couture clothing. The real platform for the development of Deco and modernism in the United States was provided by the immigration of European designers such as Joseph Urban, Kern Weber and Eliel Saarinen. Their designs, which followed the trends in European modernism, became a major influence on young designers in the U.S., many of whom had visited Europe. The U.S. also exerted a strong influence on Europe — not necessarily from its design output but from basic American industry and life styles. Thus, it was this consolidation of influences that gave Deco in this country its special characteristics.

It was a Midwest institution, the Cranbrook Academy of Art near Detroit, which hastened the acceptance of European design ideals in the U.S. This school was under the direction of Eliel Saarinen who had come to this country in 1922. He designed the academy's building and its furnishings, and examples of his unified designs appear in his own apartment where he and his wife Loja designed every detail of the interior, including the light fixtures and ceramics. It was Saarinen whose simple and unornamented entry in the 1922 Chicago Tribune Tower competition came in second. Many believed that his design should have won out over the Gothic inspired entry of architects Hood and Howells. While not winning, Saarinen's design did influence many young architects in the U.S. and Midwest.

The main achievement of American design in the year of the Paris Exhibition was the skyscraper. It was an architectural form arrived at by the necessity to deal with the scarce urban space in cities such as New York. But it transcended such a necessity to become a symbol of commercial power as well as man's refusal to accept the laws of gravity. The symbolic value of the skyscraper is shown by the speed at which it appeared in cities where there was plenty of urban space. Actually, the typical stepped back shape of the skyscraper can be attributed to New York City's 1916 zoning ordinance, which required that tall buildings should be set back in stages to allow light into the street. Thus, the stepped back shape emerged as the

ziggurat, which became an important part of the Deco design language.

Raymond Hood, who with his partner John M. Howells had designed the Neo-Gothic Chicago Tribune Tower, was most responsible for the simplification of the skyscraper style. Starting with New York's Rockefeller Center, his skyscrapers became progressively simplified with less historical ornament and greater emphasis on the typical silhouette and tall central tower. The Rockefeller Center begun in 1931 was considered to be the best example of this style.

The Empire State Building of 1932 by Shreve, Lamb & Harmon exhibits the same monumental scale as the Rockefeller Center. Contrasted with this simplified and monumental type of Deco architecture is the 1930 Chrysler Building by William Van Allen, a good example of the more flamboyant Deco that shows the complex nature of such buildings. Its ziggurat shape is topped by a tower and spire, with sculpted decorations comprised of automobile motifs such as hub caps, radiators, mud guards and fins. The building functioned as a perfect image of the Chrysler Corporation, suggesting both product and corporate power.

The interior design of skyscrapers was as important as the exterior treatment. In the lobbies, shapes and designs from the exterior appeared in such places as elevator doors, light fixtures, ceiling moldings and murals. So it was that in the U.S., architects led the development of the new Deco style — unlike in Europe where the artistic taste makers were generally found in the world of fashion. American designers such as Eliel Saarinen were trained as architects and were first known for their buildings. Designers of furniture and decorative items looked to architecture for their inspiration.

Photo courtesy of Robert Riebe

Streamlined technology is evident in this Rock Island Lines locomotive.

Art Deco architecture was not just used for skyscrapers in large cities. Inspired by the works of architects such as Saarinen, Hood and others, regional designers used the Art Deco style for commissions in smaller cities such as Peoria, Rock Island and Springfield, Illinois. The Deco style was often used in the designs of office buildings, schools, post offices, city halls, store buildings, theaters and apartment buildings. Benj. A. Horn, of the Rock Island architectural firm of Cervin & Horn, was responsible for the design of many important Art Deco style buildings in the city starting in 1920 as local consultant for the Fort Armstrong Theatre. In the 1930s, the successor firm of Cervin & Stuhr carried on the Art Deco design tradition in Rock Island.

Another impetus for Deco popularity was the economic Depression of the 1930s, when the style was popularized throughout the country. It appeared everywhere on such mass-produced objects as furniture, lighting fixtures, decorative ceramic figures and vases, barware, jewelry, dishes and ash trays. Basic aspects of the Deco style were so adaptable that it appeared to have been adopted as the official format for buildings produced under the Public Works Administration (PWA) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). These federal agencies were established by President Franklin Roosevelt to provide work for architects, designers, builders and decorative artists. The PWA and WPA financed all types of public buildings across the U.S., and the collaboration of artists, designers, sculptors and painters which had worked so well in the 1920s was continued on into the 1930s.

A significant design innovation during the Depression era was "streamlining," which occurred at the time former European minimalist designers were experimenting with new United States technologies. In Germany, the Bauhaus art school was closed in 1933 and Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, Josef Albers and Lazlo Moholy-Nagy all came to the United States. They brought with them Bauhaus theories and functionalism. At this time, the U.S. had the technology to produce streamlined trains, ships and automobiles, as well as the streamlined building such as the diner. In 1934, it was proposed to Roosevelt that streamlining should be adopted as a symbol of the restructuring of the American economy, and the New York World Fair Exposition of 1939 in New York City became a visible example of this theme.

The Depression was a catalyst for furniture and interior design, as it was for architecture. Following the stock market collapse and the economic Depression that followed, American designers seriously embraced mass production and the use of cheap materials such as metal, glass and plastic. Manufacturers that had first hesitated to produce Deco objects were able to see the commercial possibilities and committed money to their production.

By the mid-1930s, it was difficult to see any clear

distinction between industrial design and interior or furniture design, not only in the kitchen but in the dining room and living room. The radio, and later the television set, telephone and phonograph were all examples of this trend. Designer Raymond Loewy was the undisputed master of the streamlined style. His designs ranged from pencil sharpeners to Frigidaire home appliances to logos and products for such companies as Exxon and Pepsodent.

The Deco style was also promoted by the motion picture industry. Films drew their ideas from fashion, interior design and architecture, and made them glamorous and ready for copying by their movie audiences. The movie theaters themselves were probably the most extravagant examples of Art Deco — merging such different styles as Spanish and Egyptian.

Jill Doak

Metal light fixture on Rock Island High School.

Art Deco in the U.S., including the Midwest, was successful because it could be adapted at so many levels, all the way from skyscrapers to kitsch tourist souvenirs. This flexibility made it just as appropriate for high style, as well as for mass produced objects without any loss of identity.

Art Deco Revival

During the mid 1960s a revival of interest in Art Deco occurred. A serious re-evaluation of the style resulted in two exhibitions: *"Les Annees 25 - Art Deco, Bauhaus, Stijl, Esprit Nouveau"* held in Paris in 1966, and *"Jazz Age"* in 1969 that launched a new permanent collection of Deco in the Brighton (England) Museum. Also, Bevis Hillier's book *Art Deco of the Twenties and Thirties* provided an informed perspective on the style and established the term "Art Deco," which is now universally accepted. By the early 1970s, there had been more exhibitions on the Deco style around the world, as well as many magazine articles on the subject. Also, collectors have formed Art Deco associations and several cities have annual Art Deco shows.

Deco was one of the many styles used as inspiration by designers in the late 1960s. At the end of the 1960s, Deco was often used in interiors and costumes as a highly desired decorative motif. Television and the motion picture industry produced drama series and films that dealt with Deco period themes. And Deco even influenced the post modern era of architecture, where it was drawn upon for inspiration by architects such as Robert Venturi and Michael Graves. They, in turn, have also designed furniture and small scale objects in the Deco style.

It is difficult to say at this point what direction the revival of the Art Deco style will take in the future, or what long term impact post modernism will have on urban or interior design. However, it is safe to say that Deco has become well known to many people who have no first hand knowledge of it - and perhaps that it will be with us as a design inspiration for some time to come.

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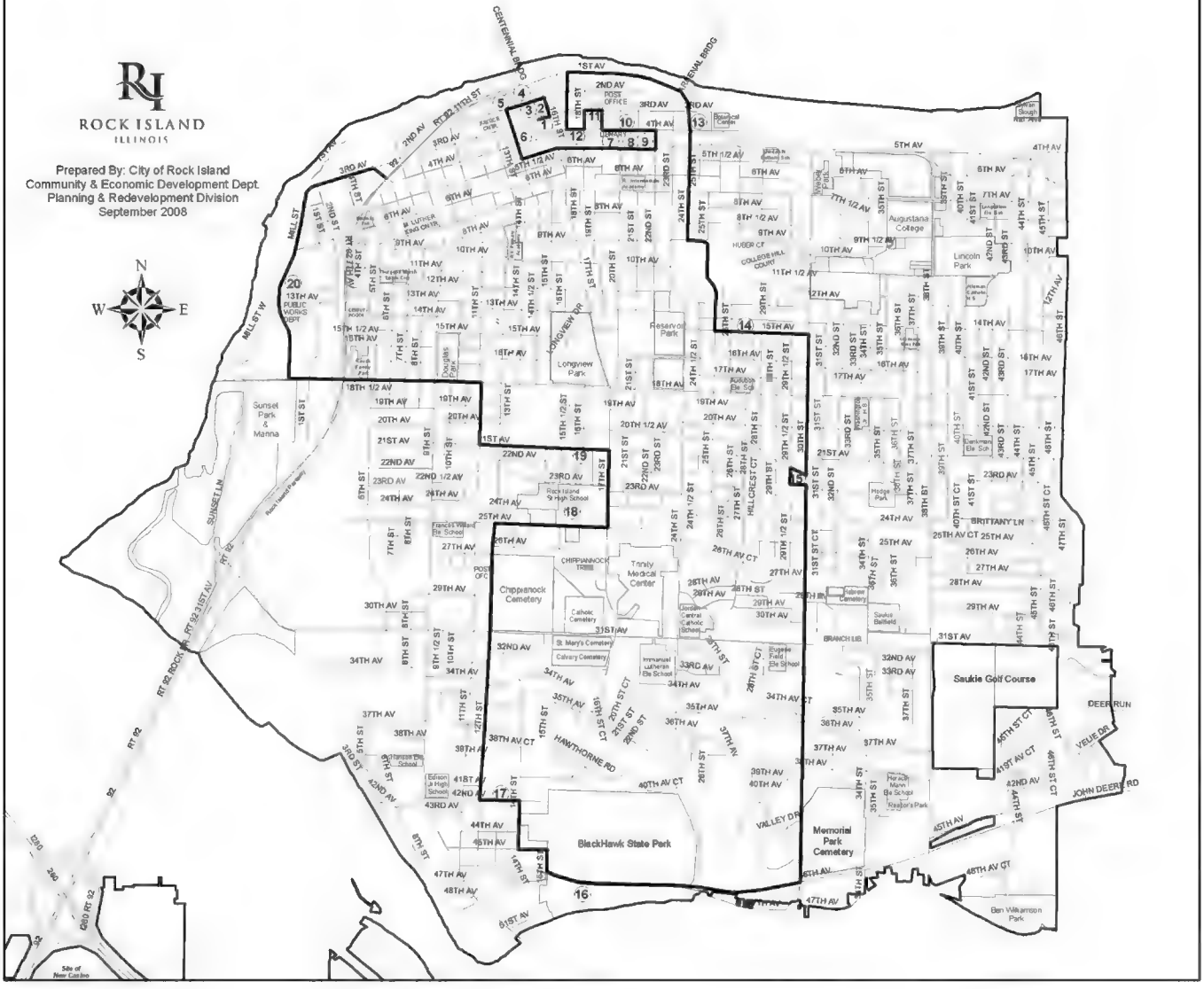


1. Rock Island City Hall
1528 3rd Avenue

1940

The Art Deco styled Rock Island City Hall was designed in 1938 by the architectural firm of Cervin & Stuhr. The rectangular two- and three-story, stone faced building displays restrained Deco elements that include vertical fluting around the main entry and on the applied columns that separate the window bays, as well as the circular moldings over the front doorway.

The main facade on 3rd Avenue is symmetrically arranged with a centered doorway at the first level. The paired metal framed doors with glass transom are framed with curving vertical fluting and a row of circular moldings. Over the doorway, on the stone blocks with a scalloped bottom edge, is incised the words "CITY HALL." On each side of the main doorway are five aluminum framed, double-hung windows (two pairs and a single one). At the upper two levels are panels of similarly styled windows framed by applied pilasters with vertical fluting that rises to the plain parapet. The spandrels between the second and third floor windows also have vertical fluting.

The 16th Street side of the three story section of City Hall has three window bays with paired aluminum framed double-hung windows at each level, recessed slightly between columns flush with the wall plane. The spandrels between the second and third story windows display vertical fluting.

The rear part of City Hall is a two story light brick faced building that houses the Police Department. A part of this wing is set back from the main front part of City Hall and the rear wing. It contains the entry to the Police Department and a series of 1/1 double-hung windows divided by brick sections that display horizontal banding. The slightly projecting entry bay in the Police Department wing displays some distinctive Art Deco features. This two story brick and stone element contains a metal framed door with two glass lights, with a molded cut stone surround. There is a metal canopy over the doorway with vertical fluting and the words "POLICE DEPT." Above the canopy is a vertical stone section set in the brick wall facing, in the center of which is a strip of glass blocks. Above the glass blocks, the stonework is fluted to give a vertical emphasis. A set of stone steps with a low stone balustrade completes the Police Department entry feature.

Eric Wala

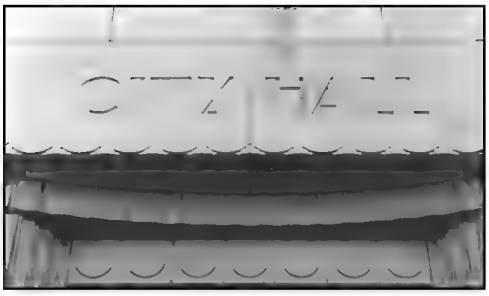
The vestibule and lobby of the City Hall are tastefully designed in the modern manner. The walls of the vestibule are covered in a deep green marble, a material that is also used for the baseboards in the lobby area. The lobby walls are paneled with white oak, which is also used for the decorative crown moldings. The beautiful terrazzo floor features a large multi-colored (black, yellow and red) star shaped design in the center of the lobby. Over the door to the stairs leading to the basement is a metal faced, Deco styled clock

Although designed in 1938, the cornerstone for the new city hall was not laid until June 3, 1940. Excavation work had begun in January, 1940, and blasting was used to dig the space. General contractor for the project was T. S. Willis Construction Company of Janesville, Wisconsin. That firm was awarded the contract by city council for a cost of $154,970. Altogether, the 1940 city hall cost $275,000. The project was financed by a bond issue approved at a referendum in February 1939.

Original plans for city hall were much more elaborate. One version of the 1938 architectural rendering shows the main entrance facing 16th Street and the center of the building soaring a narrow six stories in height, with the balance of the building at two stories. That plan was evidently scrapped because the bond referendum

could not be achieved in time, and cost estimates were $63,000 higher than the construction cost of the building we have today. Even today's City Hall had different cost options. An optional bid item was the facing, which was bid as buff-faced brick or smooth limestone.

Olof Cervin and William Stuhr were the architects for this project. Cervin was a graduate of Augustana College, and had been practicing in Rock Island for many years, including an earlier partnership with Benj. A. Horn, a notable architect of many of the buildings included in this booklet. Together Cervin & Stuhr were known for such projects as Arsenal Courts and many Watch Hill residences. William Stuhr later completed the 1st National Bank of Rock Island, Augustana Student Union, Rock Island Federal Building and 45 school projects. Stuhr says he was most proud of his reconstruction work of the Broadway Presbyterian Church after a devastating fire.



Jill Doak

While construction was undertaken, City Hall offices were temporarily relocated in the Rock Island Savings Bank building and annex, and the police station was transferred to the corner of 15th Street and 2nd Avenue, adjacent to the then county jail.

The mayor's suite has not changed since the original plans were created for city hall. The only change has been in title, where the city manager occupies what was once the city attorney's office. City Hall also originally included offices for the Works Progress Administration, Streets Superintendent, Playground Commission, Park Board, and Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

Eric Wala

Plans were in the works for many years to construct a new City Hall. In 1935 there had even been unanimous council action to authorize the mayor to proceed with a proposition to exchange City Hall for the Post Office building located a block north. There was an active movement to completely replace the 1880s Second Empire city hall, a former armory, with a new, modern facility. The old City Hall was razed from October to December 1939. Newspaper accounts of the demolition say: "None mourn its passing: No tears were shed as wreckers late in October began razing the old Rock Island city hall building, which seemed almost ready to fall down anyway. The structure had long outlived its usefulness as a municipal building.....The new building will be a welcome change from the cramped, dirty, odorous, 60-year old structure that served as headquarters for the city's government."

Completion of the new city hall was accomplished under the mayoral administration of Robert P. Galbraith, a Buick and GMC truck dealer who lived at 1840 10th Street. The Honorable Mayor Galbraith was the leader of many public building projects in Rock Island, including the Centennial Bridge (see number 4), the Sewage Treatment Plant (see number 20) and a $3,000,000 sewer project.

1940 photograph.

2. Supreme Office Building
Royal Neighbors of America
230 16th Street

1928

One of the finest examples of Art Deco architecture in Rock Island is the 1928 era Royal Neighbors of America Building, which was designed by Pond & Pond, Martin & Lloyd Architects. It is a large L-shaped, three story Bedford limestone faced building with a Mansard type slate roof.

The principal symmetrically designed facade on 16th Street has three basic vertical bays, two end ones and a long central section. In each of the end bays are three casement type, small paned windows at each level. To break up the flat stone wall, shallow pilasters were applied on each side of the panel containing the windows, with an additional flat pilaster applied at the first level. At the cornice level and in the spandrel area are ornate Deco style decorative elements, with both a horizontal and vertical emphasis.

In the center of the long center section of the facade is the opulent main entry set in a circular arched opening outlined with dentils, over which are carved reclining figures. The figures were sculpted by Nellie V. Walker, an eminent Chicago sculptor and affiliate of Larado Taft's Chicago Midway Studio. The cherubs and semi-nude women are intended to portray characteristics of womanly neighborliness and, at the same time, convey protection and sympathy.

The exterior brass framed glass doors leading to the foyer, and the tall transom area are richly designed with filigreed shapes protecting the glass sections. Above the doorway are three casement type windows with small panes at the two upper levels. On either side of the doorway and upper window panels are applied pilasters, fluted at the second and third floor levels. These are capped by a pediment with sculpted, low relief figures portraying the physical and spiritual side of the Good Samaritan, along with other bas relief decorations at the cornice level. On either side of the center panel in the central section of the facade are panels of casement windows, paired at each level. At the first level, the windows have circular arched heads, with the transom area covered with filigreed brass, similar to the treatment on the outer doorway. The cornice, beyond the center section of the building, is capped with a decorative bronze ornamental band that reflects the green color of the Mansard roof.

The 3rd Avenue facade, while not as ornate, is similar to that on 16th Street. There appear to have been few changes in the exterior of the building since it was built.

On the interior, the walls of the foyer are covered with cream colored paneled Mankato stone. Beyond the

Dick Oberg

paired interior foyer doors, in their segmental arched stone frame, lies a large lobby. The walls of the lobby were originally finished with Mankato stone, and it had a flagstone floor with patterns formed by lines of faience tile in four Persian colors. The lobby was extensively remodeled in 1965 when the walls were covered with Appalachian Butternut paneling. The flagstone floor was covered with custom designed carpeting that incorporates the company's emblem. Hanging from the circular ceiling coffer is a crystal chandelier imported from Austria. While the lobby area no longer conveys an Art Deco feeling, the decorative cast iron railings on the stairs leading off the lobby do reflect the more ornate aspects of the early Deco era. Also relating to the interior's early design is the softly colored tile wainscoting in the stairwells and hallways leading off of the lobby. Another impressive interior space is the company's board room, which retails its original walnut paneling and marble fireplace mantle, which has a walnut cap featuring carved geometric designs.

Dick Oberg

Royal Neighbors of America is the largest fraternal life insurance society administered by women. For much of modern history, women's organizations functioned as a subsidiary to a men's organization. And indeed this is the way the Royal Neighbors of America (RNA) began in Council Bluffs, Iowa, when the wives of Modern Woodmen of America (MWA) were invited to meet for a social in 1888. Soon, the women called themselves an auxiliary to the local men's camp. Founded as a social order on December 5, 1888, Royal Neighbors of America was chartered in Illinois as a fraternal benefit society on March 21, 1895. At the time, the society had a membership of 4,124 in 100 camps, with $576,000 of insurance in force.

Eric Wala

As the society grew and needed larger office facilities, it was decided to construct a Supreme Office building on the property owned by the society in Rock Island, Illinois. The building, formerly the Rock Island Club, which had been used by the society for offices and its printing department, was razed and the excavation of the new building was begun on May 3, 1927. The cornerstone was laid on a granite foundation on November 15, 1927, which was attended by many distinguished visitors.

After completion of the building, a dedication ceremony took place on October 17, 1928. Supreme Officers, State Supervisors, District Deputies, Royal Neighbors employees, and guests from the Head Office of Modern Woodmen of America, led by juvenile flag bearers, trumpeters, and escorts representing the juvenile camps of Rock Island, marched their way from the society's former headquarters in the Safety Building at 1800 3rd Avenue to this new structure on 16th Street.

The total cost of the new supreme office building was $600,000 which was equal to one dollar for each of the 600,000 members in good standing at the time of the dedication. It was a point of particular pride to the Society and its members that they did not have to borrow any funds to complete the construction of the building.

Today, the building is still the Supreme Office of Royal Neighbors of America.

Early postcard view.

3. Centennial Bridge Commission Building
201 15th Street

1941

The Centennial Bridge Commission Building is a small example of the Art Moderne style. The irregular shaped, stone faced flat roofed building features flat wall planes, a sleek appearance, and window that wraps around the northwest corner. The incised horizontal bands at the cornice level are significant decorative elements on the otherwise flat stone building face.

Eric Wala

On the front west facade the wrap-around window is on the left. In the center the main doorway is framed in a classically styled wood treatment. Above the entry is an incised Greek key design and the name of the building cut in a stone block. To the right of the doorway is a horizontal band of four windows. A garage opening with a brown overhead door is placed on the south end of the facade.

The only major changes to the building are the retrofitting of the windows and the replacement of the original front door.

Land for this building was purchased for $10,000 in August 1939. The building was built by Weisman Construction Company of Rock Island for $16,993, which included $2,500 for office equipment, a truck and a snow plow. Construction had to wait until the temporary police station which occupied the site could be moved to a permanent location at the new city hall. Bridge commission members who oversaw construction of the bridge and this building included William J. Goodell, Roy A. Miller, Frank S. Brough, Franklin F. Wingard with Mayor Robert Galbraith as an ex-officio member. Mr. Goodell was the first bridge commission chairman, and was instrumental in securing the sale of the toll revenue bonds locally through his position as bondsman for Royal Neighbors. Keith E. Poffenbarger was named the first Bridge Superintendent. He had served as the project clerk since the bridge's inception.

ROCK ISLAND LANDMARK

The Centennial Bridge Commission Building was designated a Rock Island Landmark in 1999 and was converted to a visitor center featuring Quad Cities Mississippi River bridges in 2008. The visitor center was partially funded by a Preserve America grant.

Bryan Schmid

4. Rock Island Centennial Bridge 15th Street/Mississippi River

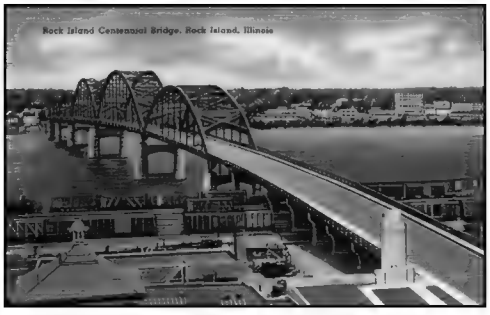
The Centennial Bridge, completed in July, 1940 at a cost of $1.75 million, was designed by Edward Ashton of the Kansas City engineering firm of Ash, Howard, Needles and Tammen. The five-span bridge was fabricated by the American Bridge Company of New York and the substructure was constructed by McCarthy Improvements Company, Davenport. The total bridge length is 4,447 feet. The roadway width is 46.5 feet. It was the first tied-arch span across the Mississippi River. Amazingly, it was also the first four lane bridge across this great river.

The superstructure of the bridge is steel, rigid-connected through tied arch trusses with plate girder approach spans. Each arch is structurally independent of the others. The superstructure rests on six concrete piers, steel H-piles, and concrete approach beams. The bridge deck is concrete over steel stringers. There are 9.75 tons of steel in the bridge.

The bridge is considered to be one of Edward Ashton's best works because of the thriftiness of his design combined with a simplistic beauty. The tied-arch configuration of the Centennial Bridge, owing to its clean lines and lack of ornamentation in the truest modern sense, proved to be both cost effective and visually striking. As far as aesthetics were concerned, Ashton particularly liked the view of the trusses as one approached the main spans. The simple massiveness of the structure makes a strong statement about how Ashton felt bridges should appear. Upon being asked what a bridge meant to him, Ashton responded by saying, "It was a strong, durable body perfectly planned and balanced." Ashton also added that he built every bridge with an eye for the visible beauty of the structure.

Centennial Bridge Commission

This image shows Centennial Bridge under construction in 1939.



Lake County Museum, Curt Teich Postcard Archives

The streamlined toll house was situated over pier three. Constructed of metal, and it was designed to be an architectural fit for the bridge. It was originally painted blue with maroon trim between bands of bright, stainless steel. The toll house was removed in 2003.

The sculptural quality of the bridge entry architecture also helps to make the bridge the major landmark that it is. At each entry there are monumental stone towers, sculpted to provide a strong vertical emphasis with setback sections.

Shortly after being elected mayor of Rock Island in 1937, Robert P. Galbraith announced plans for construction of a four lane bridge across the Mississippi River between Rock Island and Davenport. Galbraith relentlessly pursued construction of the bridge, and its completion is largely credited to him personally. In the span of one year, it is reported that he made over 60 trips to Chicago and Washington, D.C. to secure permission from the federal government to build the bridge and then to finance it. Centennial Bridge was one of the first major bridges since the inception of the Public Works Administration to be privately funded. No government funds were

Centennial Bridge Commission

This image shows tolls when they were 10 cents for automobiles. Tolls were permanently removed in 2003.

Eric Wala

used, and the bridge was financed by toll revenue bonds, with large local bond purchasers being Royal Neighbors and Modern Woodmen of America. Permission to build the bridge had to be granted by the U.S. House of Representative and Senate, and a bill was signed to that effect by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

On March 13, 1939, work began on both sides of the bridge, preceded by a ceremony. On June 5, 1940, the first 30 community leaders rolled over the bridge, but the official dedication of the bridge did not take place until July 13, 1940.

And what a celebration it was! Rock Island marked the completion of the bridge, the installment of a $3 million sewer project, the construction of the Sewage Treatment Plant, and the progress of Rock Island City Hall (see numbers 1 and 20), with a three-day fete from July 11 to 13 that headlined circus acts, a parade, a street dance, fireworks, and dedication address after dedication address. Miss Bonnie Galbraith, daughter of the mayor, christened the bridge with a bottle of champagne, and then various dignitaries dedicated the bridge before a crowd of thousands. Radio station WHBF did a live broadcast of the dedicatory festivities. Hundreds of elaborate float entries, bands and vintage automobiles wound their way over the bridge, and later that night the 10,000 street dancers moved to the Rock Island Armory due to rain. Fifty-seven thousand automobiles and 20,000 pedestrians crossed the bridge in its first eight hours of operation. The *Rock Island Argus* (see number 12) ran a special "1940 Progress" edition outlining the achievement of these great public improvements.

Newspaper articles toasted Mayor Galbraith and his great achievement. "Galbraith Bridge" was used during construction, but just before completion Mayor Galbraith declined the honor of having the bridge named for him and asked that it be call the Rock Island Centennial Bridge, which was approved by city council on May 13, 1940.

Tolls were originally charged on the Centennial Bridge, initially to retire the bonds and later to fund improvements. The earliest tolls were ten cents for automobiles and five cents for pedestrians. It was expected that 2,400,000 vehicles would cross in the first year. In 1979 the toll was raised to 15 cents, in 1981 to 25 cents, and to 50 cents in 1991. Tolls were retired in 2003 as the City of Rock Island completed upgrades to the bridge and access ramps in preparation for turning the bridge over to the State of Illinois. The Centennial Bridge Commission ceased functioning in 2005, as did Rock Island's direct control over the bridge.

Decorative sodium lighting to emphasize the bridge arches was added in 1988 through the Lights! River! Action! initiative of River Action, Inc. Since that time, nighttime views of the bridge have become as iconic as the striking daytime panoramas.

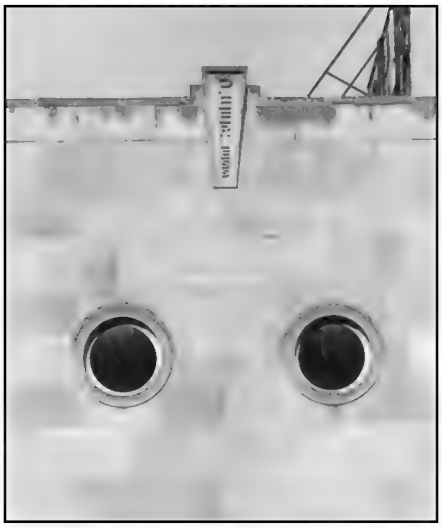
Dick Oberg

5. Peerless Dairy
1323 2nd Avenue

1938

The one and two story, buff brick and stone Peerless Dairy Building is an example of the streamlined Art Moderne style with its curved wall on the southeast corner, glass block and round windows, as well as its lack of elaborate decoration.

On the main, asymmetrical, 2nd Avenue facade, there are four basic sections. The vertical bay on the west has a band of glass block at the top of the wall and two strips of glass block running down the right side of the bay. The next wide bay has bands of metal framed windows, eight at both the first and second stories. The windows are separated by stone panels and there is a narrow stone frame around the window bands. The parapet wall on this section is lower than on the two bays on either side.



Eric Wala

The next two story bay to the east is faced with stone and features two round windows at the second level. In the center of the cornice is a wedge shaped, vertical keystone that projects above the parapet wall. On the keystone is the word "PEERLESS." At the first level, there are two doorways, both identified above in Deco-style lettering (one with the word "OFFICE" and the other with "ICE CREAM"). A metal canopy starts at the edge of the ICE CREAM door and wraps around the one story section of the building to the south. This section of the building originally had large glass show windows, which are now filled in with concrete blocks. A large warehouse wing has also been added to the north of the original building.

The structure at 1323 2nd Avenue has been known by many names over the years: Peerless Dairy Company, Sanitary Farm Dairies, Potter Ice Cream Company, Land O' Lakes, Inc. and Swiss Valley Farms, but one constant has remained: the public's love for ice cream. Many Rock Island residents fondly recall visiting this location to stop for a cool summer treat in the ice cream shop with a decidedly Deco interior. This popular destination enticed ice cream lovers until about 1975, when a tenant business, the Sugar Cone Shoppe, moved to Milan.

The Sugar Cone Shoppe was operated by Keith Tunberg, brother of Robert, of the locally famous Whitey's Ice Cream Corporation. According to family recollections, Keith opened his shop on Valentine's Day in 1966. The Sugar Cone Shoppe served Sanitary Farms / Sealtest products to a very receptive public.

From the 1930s to 1960, the property was owned by members of the Huesing family. The old Huesing bottling works were located at 104 14th Street, near the dairy's vicinity. It is believed that the building was rented to a succession of dairy product retailers. A portion of the dairy building's land was purchased by the city of Rock Island in 1960 in conjunction with Centennial Expressway's construction.

The building is currently occupied by Hawkeye Ice, which manufactures 40 tons of ice daily at the location.

Jill Doak

6. Galbraith Motor Company 1401 4th Avenue

The modernistic former car dealership building was built in 1940. At that time it was the Galbraith Motor Company, and also included a gasoline service station. The one and two story building complex contains several areas, including the one- and two-level auto repair/paint shop area in the rear that provided for a 65-car display area on the roof between the front two story section of the building and the rear two story wing.

The streamlined Art Moderne design elements are displayed on the uniquely shaped, buff brick front wing. The 4th Avenue facade is rounded on its west end, then extends about 40 feet to the east and curves again, extending to a long rounded wing, which was the former show room space. There appear to have been a number of alterations to the lower part of the front section of the building, including new metal overhead doors and new metal framed doors and show windows.

At the upper level of the facade, there are some typical Art Moderne glass block windows and five vertical, rectangular windows in the curvilinear shaped part of the building on the east. The most intact parts of the original design include the curvilinear shape of the front part of the complex, as well as the upper level fenestration.

Although not now visible on the exterior, glass blocks were also used in the southwest corner of the building, as well as on the west facade where glass block banding appeared.

When Robert P. Galbraith built his flagship automobile dealership building, he was one of the most important men in the community. As the mayor of Rock Island from 1937 to 1945, he was responsible for the most progressive public investments ever made in the city. At the same time he was constructing the modernistic Galbraith Motor Company at 1401 4th Avenue, he also oversaw construction of Centennial Bridge (see number 4), the accompanying Centennial Bridge Commission Building (see number 3), the new City Hall (see number 1), a sewage system and disposal plant (see number 20), municipal waterworks improvements, 200 blocks of street paving, and two housing projects, which included the 305-unit Arsenal Courts, now known as Century Woods, which was built to house the pre-World War II influx of workers at the Rock Island Arsenal.

Galbraith's interest in automobiles began in 1912 when he started a used car business called Tri-City Auto Exchange. He was only 22 years old. He is believed to be one of the first men to make a specialty of selling used cars as well as new ones. He acquired his first new car agency, the Halliday, in 1915, and finally incorporated the Galbraith Motor Company in 1927. He was responsible for the construction of three car sales buildings and garages in the city. His company was located at 1500 4th Avenue just prior to building the structure at 1401 4th

Jill Doak

Avenue. He sold his Buick and GMC business in 1942, and devoted his time to public life. Mr. Galbraith died on October 31, 1946 at age 56, after several years of illness with heart disease.

The Buick dealership was purchased by Kinney Buick, incorporated in 1942, and was owned by Buck Buick Company in 1945. Howard P. "Cub" Buck owned the business until the late 1960s. He was a member of the Green Bay Packers professional football team from 1921 to 1926 as an outstanding member of both the offense and defense. He started his own automobile dealership in 1928 in Rock Island after playing and coaching football for seven years. "Cub" Buck was elected to the Wisconsin Sports Hall of Fame in 1956. This building was last used as a car dealership in 1991 by Austin Buick Company.

Jill Doak

7. R.O. Sala Apartments
1907 5th Avenue

1937

Designed in 1936 by the Rock Island architectural firm of Cervin & Stuhr and constructed by Odell Construction Company, Moline, the R.O. Sala Apartment building is a rectangular shaped 2-½ story, orange brick structure with a flat roof. Its modernistic elements include a projecting vestibule, windows that wrap around the southwest corner, and a circular window on the west facade.

The asymmetrically arranged main facade on 5th Avenue has an off-center entry way set in a projecting one story element with a stepped stone cornice that contains the name of the apartment building (R.O. Sala) and is capped by a round stone finial. The brickwork, on the square pilasters on either side of the glass paneled door with side lights, features horizontal grooving. Above the vestibule is a shallower projecting element that contains a window with transom. It also has a stone cornice with a round stone finial. There is another 1-½ story brick projection containing 6/6 double-hung windows at the first floor level that extend around the corner. To the left and right of the front vestibule projection are single and paired double-hung windows at the English basement level and the two upper levels. The windows at the west end of the first floor wrap around to the west side of the apartment building.

Jill Doak

On 19th Street, there is a covered entry door on the right side. To the left of the door is a circular window with nine lights or panes. The fenestration on this elevation is similar to that on the 5th Avenue facade, with windows arranged individually or in threes. Attached to the rear of the apartment building on 19th Street is a one story, two car garage with wood overhead doors. There appear to have been few changes to the apartment building since it was built.

This six unit apartment building was occupied by the first tenants in July, 1937. There were five living spaces and one office space. The apartment entrances were off of 5th Avenue and the office entrance was from 19th Street. Dr. Roland O. Sala himself occupied the first floor office, and with his wife Margaret, the most luxurious of the apartments on the second floor. The original doctor's office included a reception room, x-ray room, consultation room, private office, laboratory, dressing room, maid's room and bath. Prior to erecting this new building, Sala practiced at 322 19th Street, another, elaborate apartment building that bears his name.

Dr. Sala was a decorated World War II surgeon, who was cited for bravery in the battle of Leyte Gulf near the Philippine Islands in 1944. He retired in 1953 from the naval reserves as a rear admiral. He was a fifth generation doctor in the Sala family.

Eric Wala

8. Bear Manufacturing 2027 5th Avenue

1936

The Happy Bear—that's what they called the impish critter who was the mascot and logo for the Bear Manufacturing Company, a business which operated in Rock Island for 63 years. The founders of Bear were brothers Will and Henry Dammann, who invented an electric starter for the Model T so auto owners could forget their cranks. They moved to Rock Island in 1913 to manufacture and sell the starter, and the company was quickly successful. The starter was so popular that Henry Ford started making electric starters standard equipment, and the Dammanns' market disappeared.

Remarkably undeterred, they still saw a business future in the automotive business and went on to build the company that was incorporated in 1917 to design and manufacture auto equipment. Bear equipment became the standard for diagnosis and repair of wheel, steering, and frame alignment. Later the company expanded auto safety equipment of all types. Bear marketed equipment to test and service sealed beam headlights (1939), ball joint suspensions (1953), and dual lamp headlights (1956).

The Happy Bear was with them from the earliest days. The accepted version of the little guy is based on a vintage slang expression, "It's a bear!" Nowadays, of course, that would mean it's a tough job, but 80 years ago, it referred to a product that was rugged and top-quality. Will Dammann thought it a perfect symbol for his top-quality company. Bear Manufacturing Company's sales room and factory was located at 114 17th Street from 1918 until 1925. Around 1926 they relocated to the Italianate style building still standing just across the avenue at the southwest corner of 5th Avenue and 21st Street. By the 1930s they also operated a service station at 527 20th Street. In July 1936, the owners celebrated the opening of a new safety inspection factory at 2027 5th Avenue with a fish fry. The east half was to have the latest Bear equipment such as frame and wheel straighteners; testers for brakes and headlamps; wheel alignment gauges, balancers and spinners; and other safety testing equipment for servicing cars, trucks, fleet owners and buses. The east front wall had a series of drive-in doors for access. However, even though it had been built for a service building, it was turned immediately into a manufacturing plant because of the need for additional space.

Bear Manufacturing faced bankruptcy during World War II when the War Production Board restricted supplies of steel, aluminum, copper and rubber to companies directly involved in defense production. Bear gave a persuasive presentation to the War Production Board that they were essential and thus averted bankruptcy. By the 1950s, this stuccoed Art Deco building mainly served as a warehouse for the Bear operation.

In 1976, Regalia Manufacturing Company acquired 2027 5th Avenue for use as a warehouse. Regalia was incorporated by Joseph Rosenfield, Lily Eichelsdoerfer, William A. Andersch and Walter A. Rosenfield in April 1900. The company was organized for the purpose of manufacturing, buying and selling costumes, uniforms and regalias and all paraphernalia for societies and fairs.

Jill Doak

An open house was held December 20, 1902 at their headquarters, 2018 4th Avenue, which was formerly the Rock Island Exchange of Union Electric Telephone and Telegraph Company. Originally established in 1897, Regalia is one of the oldest private enterprises in Rock Island. Among customers are the International Livestock Exposition, state fairs, including Illinois and Iowa, and hundreds of country fairs from Canada to Mexico. The building still serves today as a warehouse for Regalia Manufacturing.

The Bear Manufacturing building at 2027 5th Avenue is a large one-story, stucco faced flat roofed structure that reflects the streamlined Art Moderne style. Constructed in 1936, its Moderne features include its smooth wall finish with restrained surface ornamentation, a streamlined effect emphasized by a curved southeast corner, a curved parapet wall and raised, streamlined moldings on the face of the building.

Jill Doak

On the east facade, at the left, is the main corner section of the building with a curved wall on the southeast corner, and curved parapet wall on the north. The otherwise flat wall surface is decorated with slightly raised parallel lines - both vertical and horizontal, with the ones at the north side of this section curving to reflect the curved parapet. There is an entryway with a flush metal door on the curved southeast end, and two newer metal framed windows (with two lights) set within large rectangular recessed areas that were filled with concrete blocks that replaced large factory type windows. Above the windows on the right and below the streamlined raised lines at the parapet level is the name "REGALIA" in raised lettering.

To the right of the corner section of the warehouse in the long north wing, there are two rectangular, recessed areas, formerly large factory type windows - each containing a metal framed window. To the right of these are six large square openings - five multi-paned factory windows and a metal overhead door. The streamlined effect is evidenced at the cornice level which displays raised horizontal lines that curve around the north edge of the building and run vertically to the foundation.

Provided courtesy of Richard Iverson

On the south elevation, the decorative treatment is similar to that used on the east facade, with raised parallel lines used both horizontally at the cornice/parapet, vertically, and curving around the west side of the corner section of the building. The vintage image shows these raised lines were once emphasized in contrasting color. It also shows a now-missing curved parapet at the round corner.

9. Bear School of Automotive Safety Service 2103 5th Avenue

The modernistic Bear School of Automotive Safety Service (northeast corner) is a large two story, brick and metal clad, flat roofed building. Its principal modernistic features are its rounded corner on its facade and the long row of metal framed windows that extend around both sides of the two main elevations of the building. This rounded façade mirrors the similar shape of the earlier Bear building across the street.

At the first level there have been changes in the fenestration. There are a series of large square openings that contain entries, as well as an overhead door. Starting at the left end of the lower facade, there is a window wall that curves around to the west side of the building. There are metal awnings over the lower part of the building on both main elevations, one curving around the corner.

At the upper story, there is a long continuous band of metal framed windows that extend completely around the two main facades, curving at the southwest corner. The upper part of the building is sheathed in metal siding with vertical metal grooves.

Jill Doak

At the east end of the building, a rectangular shaped, one story brick wing has been added. Although some changes have been made to the building, it still retains strong elements of the modernistic trends occurring at the time it was built.

The structure at 2103 5th Avenue was a component of the Bear Manufacturing complex at this intersection. It was dedicated on November 30, 1949. Bear Manufacturing had been training mechanics in automotive safety service for more than 20 years. In fact, they were so respected for their record in training that they were given the honor of managing the Official Safety Service Center at the Indy 500 in "Gasoline Alley." From 1931 until the late 1990s, Bear — and companies that later bought the Bear brand — were in charge of servicing during this legendary race, where speed, performance and demand on vehicles increased several-fold each decade. Bear could provide the best-trained technicians in the business.

Training 800 to 1,000 mechanics annually from all parts of the country takes classroom and cutting-edge service center space. So Will Dammann built this $400,000 automotive safety school. The new building made it possible for the Bear Company to triple the capacity of students wishing to enroll for the safety service course. The grand opening was called an event of national importance in the automobile world, because it was the only school exclusively devoted to teaching a variety of subjects related to motor vehicle safety. There was an elaborate three-day opening celebration, with a dinner for 300 auto executives held here at the new school. Keynote speaker was the director of training for General Motors. Probably much more entertaining was Wilbur "Gentlemen, start your engines" Shaw, Indy Speedway president and racing champion, who told tales of his racing days to a large lunch crowd of local business and civic leaders.

In 1968, the safety service school added the Bear Actionalysis Diagnostic Test Center. This innovation added a diagnostic test lane where nearly 150 tests for performance were added that included everything from windshield wipers to brakes. Over 600 automotive technicians were trained at the school that year.

By this time Bear was being run by Victor Day, who became president upon the death of Will Dammann in 1953. The Chairman of the Board of Directors was Will Dammann's daughter, Doris Dammann Day. They opened a new manufacturing plant at 405 30th Avenue in 1965, but operations continued at the three buildings at this intersection for several more years. The Days served Bear Manufacturing until 1972, when the firm merged with Applied Power Industries, Inc. When the Damman/Day family sold the company, manufacturing facilities remained in Rock Island, but the school was closed in 1978. In 1980, all manufacturing operations in Rock Island closed as well. Bear product lines were bought and sold by various companies through 1999 in the United States, and then in 2005 the Bear subsidiary in Canada reintroduced The Happy Bear to North America.

Fortunately, the Bear Manufacturing legacy continues in Rock Island. Following the passing of Mrs. Day in 1987, a gift in excess of $10,000,000 fully funded the Doris and Victor Day Foundation, which is committed to making our Quad City community a better place.

10. Banquet Baking Company
2011 4th Avenue

1940

The small one story, flat roofed Banquet Baking building evokes aspects of Art Moderne with windows that continue around the southwest corner of the facade, and the large circular window to the right of the front entry. Originally faced with buff colored bricks, the exterior is now stuccoed with a synthetic material.

The front of the building is expressed in two basic elements, the small rectangular shaped front wing and a much larger, slightly taller rear utilitarian portion of the building. Most of the Art Moderne detailing appears on the small front part of the building. There are a series of metal framed windows that wrap around to the west side. To the right of this window is a single entry door and the large circular window mentioned above.

The March 11, 1940 issue of the *Rock Island Argus* reports a new bakery opened at 2011 4th Avenue by Nick S. and Harry S. Coin. The name Banquet Baking Company was changed to Sunkist Baking Company by 1945, but the Coin Brothers continued to be involved, with Harry as the vice-president and Nick as the secretary/treasurer. Both bakeries were wholesale establishments. Before the formation of Banquet Baking Company, Nick and Harry Coin were confectioners with Coin Brothers and Kerr Confectioners beginning in 1910, and then with the Davenport Candy Company.

After the baking days came to an end, the building was vacant for several years, beginning in 1957. After 1963 the building was used by the U.S. Reserves, Montgomery Elevator, Centennial Video, and the Stop Inn.

Eric Wala

11. Fort Armstrong Theatre
1826 3rd Avenue

Designed by the local architectural firm of Cervin & Horn and the Chicago firm of Brawn & Ermling in 1919 and 1920, the Fort Armstrong Theatre is a large, rectangular shaped three story, Art Deco style building faced with Indian red brick and polychrome terra cotta. The stippled Indian red brick is used on the 3rd Avenue and 19th Street facades, with common brick covering the south and west walls. The terra cotta was designed specifically for the theater by Rudolph Sandberg and produced by the Midland Terra Cotta Company of Chicago.

Rudolph Sandberg and his young family were moved to Rock Island by Brawn & Ermling to work with local associate architects, Cervin & Horn. Sandberg was responsible for design of ornamental details and supervision of its construction. He was invited to become an associate with Cervin & Horn, which he eventually did the following year. He opened his own architectural firm in 1927. More of his terra cotta work is evident on the Illinois Oil Products Building (see number 14).

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places Since 1980

The focal points of the Fort Theatre exterior are the 3rd Avenue facade with its curved northeast corner and the northernmost bay on the east side. This area is divided into three horizontal levels; a ground floor, second floor with elaborate window treatments, and an attic featuring decorative cornice moldings. The facade is organized vertically by a series of brick pilasters which rise from plain bases at grade to the attic with elaborate ornamentation. Between the pilasters are entries and/or windows. Most of the exterior Deco ornamentation is found around the second floor windows and at the attic level.

The second story windows dominate the front facade. The window set in the curved corner wall is flanked on each side by windows of the same size, one facing 3rd Avenue and one facing 19th Street. Each rectangular opening contains 20 small glass panes and is set in a large round-arched terra cotta frame. The tympanum-like area above each window contains colorful Deco style decorations, including: an Indian chief (in the center window) with spears

Dick Oberg

and arrows, circles with Egyptian-like symbols, and a large frontal view of a bird. The main color of the terra cotta frame is ivory, with yellow, bright blue, green and brick red being used for the details of the designs. Every curving line eventually shows itself to be an elaborate terra cotta snake.

Eric Wala

In the center of the facade at the second story level are three large windows which are similar in style to those on the southeast corner, but tied more closely together. Between the triple openings are bundles of spiral terra cotta colonnettes with vegetative capitals crowned by tall decorative panels incorporating feathers and corn motifs, and culminating in bunches of arrows. Immediately below these windows is the main entrance to the theater. The exterior of the entry has been remodeled and is now faced with marble, which is not original. The original marquee was replicated from photographic documentation and installed in 2001. The westernmost window on the second story is different from the others. It is rectangular in shape, multi-paned and edged in terra cotta, but does not have a circular arched head. Also, the terra cotta is entirely ivory in color with no other colors used. With the exception of the central triple window, all of the second story windows have shallow, cast iron balconies.

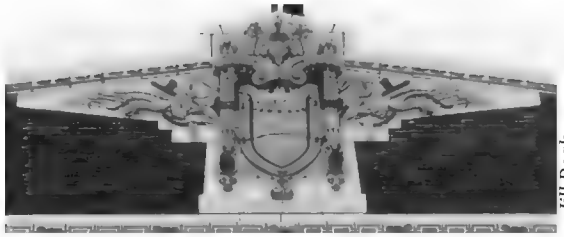
Eric Wala

The main theater entrance, in the center of the 3rd Avenue facade, opens to the outer lobby. The box office was originally on the left of the theater entrance. Also on the exterior were mosaic panels and recessed poster frames. Alterations in 1952 included moving the box office to the foyer, which is separated from the lobby by glass doors.

Beyond the lobby is the auditorium, which originally had a seating capacity of 1,800 (including 100 in the balcony), with five sections of seats and four aisles. The original auditorium seats have been removed and the main floor reconfigured for a dinner theater, which seats about 350.

The stage area consists of an orchestra pit and a proscenium stage 22'6" deep. The proscenium arch, modeled in high relief, frames the stage. Ornamentation of the arch reflects the exterior of the building, incorporating spiral columns, symbols relating to Indian motifs, and three large Indian heads at the extremities of the arch. Within the proscenium arch on either side of the stage are large, round-arched grilles of intricate design, each with a small balcony.

The auditorium contains remnants of the original decoration. The east and west walls retain a series of cornices and pilasters which feature Native American and prairie motifs. On the upper part of the side walls between the balcony and stage are large panels framed by high relief cornices and pilasters, including an extension of the decorative pilasters from below. The pilasters here and flanking the balcony fire exits are crowned with frontal Indian heads surrounded by upright corn leaves.


Jill Doak

The ceiling of the auditorium features a large, recessed oval dome framed by heavy rectangular moldings. The original lighting system, which has been largely replaced, was patterned

Note the vertical marquee in this 1937 postcard from the Lake County Museum's Curt Teich Postcard archives.

after that of the Riviera Theater in Chicago, and included remote control switches and dimmers for thousands of concealed lights in many colors. The original contractor for the electrical lights was Victor Pearlman Company of Chicago. Architectural Decorating Company of Chicago was also a subcontractor for the new theater. Built expressly for the showing of films, the theater's designers employed decorative elements in the Art Deco idiom to reflect the early history of the Rock Island area.

The Fort Armstrong Theatre opened on January 19, 1921 at the height of the silent movie years. Opening night featured the film "Midsummer Madness" by William DeMille, a ten piece orchestra, as well as other musical and comedic presentations. Lila Lee, co-star of "Midsummer Madness," appeared in person. Much excitement was generated when congratulatory telegrams arrived from Paramount Pictures president Adolf Zukor, Cecil B. DeMille, and comedian Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle, among many luminaries of the film world. On opening night the cost of adult admission was 36 cents, plus four cents war tax. Children's admissions were 20 cents.

At the time of its construction the theater was, for Rock Island, a large and luxurious structure, built primarily for the showing of motion pictures. Additionally, it housed a nursery, a tearoom, a dance salon, a photographer's studio, and Hickey Brothers cigar store on the corner.

The original owners were Rosenfield, Hopp and Company. Mr. Walter Rosenfield stated in the *Argus* that, "Proper amusement is as important to the well being of the community as modern stores and flourishing factories." Out of firm belief in that statement, Mr. Rosenfield made several trips to Chicago to study theaters there. He hired Brawn & Ermling to draw up a plan in 1919. The plans were drawn in the Chicago office and had the Native American motif, which was Mr. Rosenfield's idea. A local entrepreneur and investor, Mr. Rosenfield was president of the Rock Island Bridge and Iron Works. Mr. Hopp became managing director of the theater. This expression of faith in the city of Rock Island cost over $500,000 for the building and furnishings. Furnishings for the cigar store, soda fountain and photographer's studio were not included in this figure. In 1928 another $56,000 was spent at the theater in order to present talking pictures. May of 1930 saw another $50,000 spent to cool the interior.

Eric Wala

12. Argus Building
1724 4th Avenue

1925

Designed in 1925 by Benj. A. Horn, Cervin & Horn Architects, the Argus Building is a large rectangular, two and three story stone faced, Art Deco styled edifice with a flat roof and an angled northeast corner.

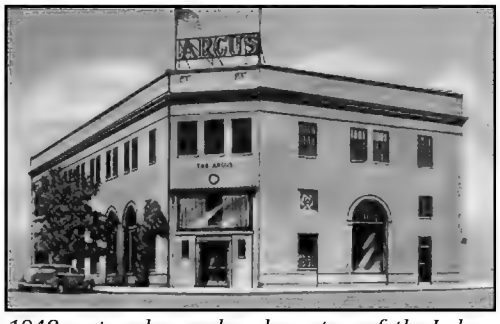
The main (long) facade has seven massive window openings with circular arched heads at the first floor level. These windows, along with others in the building, have been retrofitted with contemporary metal sash. The arched heads are fluted, terminating at classically styled plinths. At the south end of the first level is a doorway with a bas relief panel above it that includes a decorative urn motif with the dates 1851-1924. There is a matching bas relief design over a rectangular window at the other end of this elevation. On the north end of the long elevation is the main entryway in the angled corner area. The double leaved metal doors are framed in bronze with Deco designs. On either side of the doorway are small rectangular openings with decorative metal grilles. Above the doorway and openings is a classically styled cornice, above which is emblazoned the name of the newspaper, *The Rock Island Argus.* At the upper level of the main facade there are 16 rectangular shaped windows. Above them, at the base of the parapet wall, is a classically detailed cornice with dentils. This cornice also wraps around the angled end of the building on the north facade. In the angled end, there are also three rectangular shaped windows at the second level, and the parapet wall here features two decorative bas relief panels.

Eric Wala

Toward the center of the north facade, there is one massive arched window that matches the one on the main facade. There are two other rectangular shaped windows and a doorway at the first level. At the mezzanine level there is a decorative bas relief panel over the window near the main entry, and two other square casement windows to the right of the large circular arched window. At the second level, there are five rectangular shaped windows similar to those on the principle facade.

Early postcard view.

The main room of the Argus building on the first floor rises to approximately 20 feet and displays a remarkable range of exquisitely detailed Art Deco ornamentation. Included are a richly designed coffered ceiling with softly colored ornamental plaster moldings (which also appear on the mezzanine column capitals), ornate brass chandeliers circled (top and bottom) with bare light bulbs, a multi-colored slate floor and a massive curved counter that separates the lobby from the newsroom area. Other original Deco details include the metal radiator covers with geometric designs, Deco style light sconces mounted on the lobby walls, plaster bas relief panels in the arched tympanums of two of the lobby windows that display winged serpents, birds and foliage; and a decorative metal railing around the mezzanine that runs along two sides of the main first floor space.



1948 postcard reproduced courtesy of the Lake County Museum's Curt Teich Postcard Archives.

Eric Wala

Since its construction, the Argus building has been the home of the only surviving Rock Island newspaper, *The Argus*. The newspaper began in 1851 as the *Rock Island Republican* when Rock Island was a small but growing community of 1,960. In 1855, publisher J.B. Danforth, a Democrat, changed its name to *The Argus* when the Republican Party replaced the Whig Party as the other major political party. It was named after a character in Greek mythology which had many eyes and was ever watchful. In 1882, *The Argus* was purchased by John W. Potter and from then until the paper was sold in 1985, it was owned and operated by the Potter family.

As the city of Rock Island grew, so did *The Argus*. Under the tutelage of Mrs. Minnie Potter, who became president of the paper after her husband, John Potter, Jr. died in 1898, the paper prospered. In 1925, Mrs. Minnie Potter instructed the paper's architects, Cervin & Horn of Rock Island, to construct a building that the "community could view with continuous pride." Some of the more notable buildings of Horn and the architectural partnerships he was associated with include: Argus Building, Augustana Book Concern, Weishar Apartments, Rock Island Masonic Temple, Fort Armstrong Theatre (see number 11), Augustana College Gymnasium, National Guard Armory, Rock Island High School (see number 18), Illinois Oil Products Building (see number 13), and Grant School. Mr. Horn was a graduate of Columbia College, New York and the University of Illinois. He began working with Olof Cervin in 1918, and later separated to form his own firm in the 1930s.

The Argus Building was erected in 1925 by the Henry W. Horst Co. of Rock Island at a cost of $300,000 inclusive of new equipment. *The Argus* celebrated its move to its new building by publishing a 264 page newspaper which was the largest in the company's history and at the time, one of the largest published by any newspaper.

One of the most important features of the exterior of the building was the bulletin board. It was placed over the entrance at a 45-degree angle. To operate the bulletin board, someone had to climb through the trap door in the newsroom into a pit. Here the operator could keep the scoreboard of the World Series. Those were the days before radio and television. Operators watched the Western Union ticker and then moved the ball around the field and the players around the bases on the scoreboard. It was not unusual for hundreds and sometimes thousands of spectators to stand outside and watch the scoreboard during the entire game. A projection machine was also sometimes used to project bulletins on a transparent screen located directly behind the plate glass. Bulletins such as election results were projected. After the emergence of radio and television in the 1940s, the paper no longer used the scoreboard and eventually stopped using the window for bulletins. In 1992, the window was removed and replaced by a large bronze sign that identifies the building as the home of *The Rock Island Argus*.

Eric Wala

13. Illinois Oil Company Building
321 24th Street

1922

The Illinois Oil Company Building is a large rectangular, three story brick and white terra cotta faced edifice, built in 1922-23 in the Art Deco style. It was conceived by the architectural firm of Cervin & Horn. Rudolph Sandberg, an associate with the firm well known for his terra cotta work (see number 11), was chiefly responsible for the design.

The 24th Street facade is asymmetrically arranged with three large basic vertical bays. The bays are delineated by brick and terra cotta, tower-like piers with decorative terra cotta caps. The 4th Avenue facade is comprised of just one major bay with three minor vertical divisions. In addition to the ivory, the terra cotta details are executed in one other color only, blue.

Eric Wala

The left vertical bay on the 24th Street facade contains the main entryway with a decorative tympanum featuring dragons on either side of a crest that is recessed under the segmental arched, stepped back hood. Over the arched hood is the name "Illinois Oil Co." in ivory colored terra cotta letters against a blue terra cotta background. Above the entry at the second level are three small square windows with terra cotta transoms with shield designs. Above these windows are two double-hung windows with a tripartite transom. Dividing the paired double-hung windows at the second and third story levels in the north part of this bay are terra cotta piers topped by a cross motif that extends up over the parapet wall. At the first level in this bay, large windows have been filled with brick and glass block.

ROCK ISLAND LANDMARK

The fenestration in the rest of the 24th Street facade is similar to that on the northern most bay - strips of double-hung windows in twos and threes, outlined by vertical brick and terra cotta piers topped by terra cotta crosses that pierce the top of the parapet wall. The lower level of this facade and the one on 4th Avenue once had large openings that provided entry to a retail paint store, washing and greasing room and, under the corner of the building, a six pump filling station. There were three additional pumps on the outside. The first floor openings have been in filled with various materials, including vertical wood siding, and overhead doors. Still intact in the transom area of the first level of the building are terra cotta panels and decorative terra cotta plaques.

Eric Wala

Frank P. Welch and James M. Welch, brothers, began in 1908 with a capital of $800 to fund their idea of marketing oil directly to the consumer. Sales for their first year in business were given as $20,000. Sales for 1922 were $18,000,000. "Team track method" was used for delivery to the farm trade. When a designated area had sufficient orders to fill a railroad box car, it would be sent to a central town within a particular area. The car would be on a siding with a company man in charge of distribution and collection for the orders. The business continued to flourish enough so that gasoline was added. Bulk plants were built, and then service stations were constructed in the areas with larger consumptions. By 1941, there were 100 bulk plants in seven states and some 80 stations. There were two stations in Rock Island.

A STORY OF THE ILLINOIS OIL CO.
GENERAL OFFICES
Oil Blending Plant
Paint Steel Tank and Sheet Metal Factories
At ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS
Paint Factory, Grease Factory, Oil Blending Plant and Sheet Metal Factory See description following page

Historic line drawing of the Illinois Oil complex from the business letterhead.

By the time 1922 drew to a close, there were two refineries at Bristow and Cushing, Oklahoma. There were 300 men on the payroll at the refineries working three shifts. The Rock Island plant employed some 500 men in addition to 142 outside salesmen. The sales territory had expanded to include Minnesota, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Tennessee, Oklahoma and Arkansas, in addition to the earlier states of Iowa and Illinois. Company officials, at the time, claimed that its 24th Street filling station was the largest in the world. It had nine gas pumps, four attendants always on duty and an underground storage capacity of 120,000 gallons. Illinois Oil Company was also associated with paint manufacturing and retail, and the shipping of bulk gasoline, kerosene, linseed oil, paints and greases. A barrel and steel products plant was later added that manufactured truck tanks, underground tanks, oil burner tubes and other small storage tanks and containers. Through the years brand names of Illinois Oil have been Golden Motor, Thrifty and Welch oils; Illoco greases; County Fair and Premier paints; Peer antifreezes; Supreme windshield washer, greases and oils; and Torpedo and U.S. Motor gasoline.

Eric Wala

Frank P. Welch was quoted as saying, "Rock Island was chosen as our location because of the strategic geographical advantages offered. We were the first builders of steel barrels and of a strictly pure mineral oil and were the introducers of 15 by-products from petroleum which were never before placed on the market. We are a community concern, as 95 percent of our 200,000 shares of stock are held by residents of Illinois and Iowa within 200 miles of Rock Island."

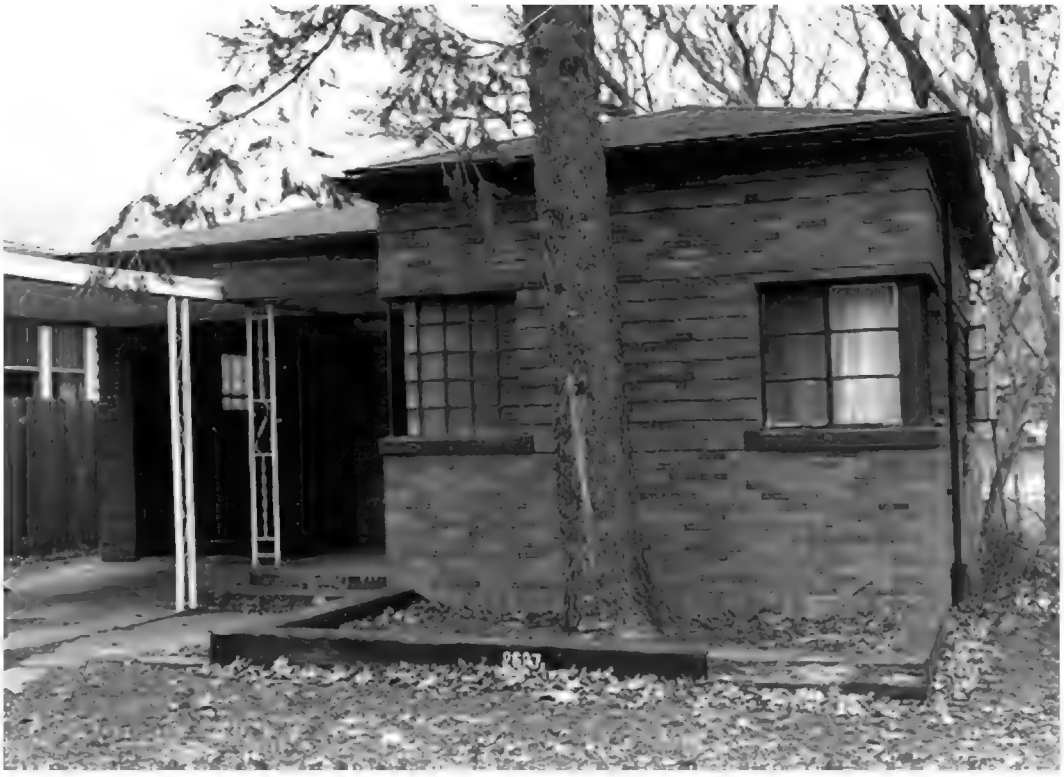
Liability lawsuits, risky business decisions during the Great Depression, and the failing health of Frank Welch, who died in 1941, led to a decrease in assets for Illinois Oil Company. From 1942 to 1944, properties and assets were sold, and the wholesale business was purchased by E.C. Jackson and Associates, who continued business under the name Illinois Oil Products.

14. Rothau House
2627 15th Avenue

1942

This small one story brick residence displays characteristics of the Art Moderne style with metal framed casement and glass block windows that continue around the corner of the front wing. The L-shaped house has a hip roof and an attached single car garage on the left side of the front facade. The main entry door is tucked between the garage and the forward extending wing on the east. It is in this wing that the Art Moderne design elements are seen. In addition to the windows that are continuous around corners, there are horizontal grooves in the brick wall between the windows, giving a horizontal, streamlined emphasis to the walls. Horizontal grooves in the brick walls are also found on other parts of the house.

This home was first owned by Henry and Emma Rothau. Oral historians report that Mr. Rothau was a Russian immigrant who worked as a brick mason. He and Emma initially lived in the forward wing of the house (the living room) and added onto their home as money and time allowed.



Eric Wala

15. Thoms House
2929 22nd Avenue

1939

The 1939 one and two story, blonde brick, hip roofed house at 2929 22nd Avenue evokes aspects of the Art Moderne, including an asymmetrical facade, curving windows on the front and side, glass block sidelights at the front door, and a flat curved metal canopy over the front stoop. The brick wall cladding is atypical of the Art Moderne style, which was never a common one for residences. Only scattered residential examples are found in the United States.

The house is irregularly shaped, with a one story garage and screened in porch wing on the east. At the first level of the front facade, there is a doorway on the left, outlined by a slightly raised brick frame. As noted earlier, the front door is flanked by glass block sidelights and there is a curved metal canopy extends over the front stoop. It is supported by two slender round columns. The front door also exhibits Moderne touches with its vertical ribbed section in the middle, in the center of which is a small glass light with vertical frosted glass sections. To the right of the front door is a wide curved bay with five pairs of metal framed, multi-paned casement windows. At the second floor level, there are three pairs of casement windows with transoms, one over the front door, and the others centered over the lower window bay. To the right of the main house block is a one story flat roofed porch with four glassed in sections. The roof cornice displays a decorative brick treatment, a line of vertically arranged bricks with a dentil-like row of bricks beneath. A brick chimney rises from the center of the roof.

Eric Wala

The east facade features a one story porch (sun room) and the slightly higher two car brick garage. At the second

Eric Wala

story, there is a door (with glass lights) in the center that leads out to the garage roof. To the left of the door is a pair of casement windows with transoms, and to the right of the door is another door and a large, square shaped window.

On the west side at the first level, there is a rectangular shaped brick bay with casement windows, transom and sidelights. To the right of this bay is a deep curved bay with a series of seven multi-paned casement windows with transoms. At the second story, there are two pairs of casement windows with transoms, and a smaller window with three lights between them.

On the north facade, there are two major vertical divisions. In the left division at the lower level are two small metal framed windows with an entry door opening (now in-filled with wood) between them. At the second level there are three metal framed windows similar to the others in the house. In the vertical division on the right (west), there is an entry door with a flat roofed canopy and a metal framed casement window with transom and sidelights on the right.

Raymond Carl and Marea E. (Lohse) Thoms were the first owners of this 1939 home. The Thoms name is locally well known due to the success of the Thoms-Proestler Company, which completed a $16 million facility in 1994 on TPC Road in southwest Rock Island.

At the time this house was built, Ray Thoms was the president-treasurer of H.T. Proestler Co. Inc. at 414-16 Harrison Street in Davenport, which was a wholesale distributor of butter, cheese and eggs. He got his start in the business in 1919 when he was just 20 years old, joining his father, William, who was a partner with Henry T. Proestler. Shortly thereafter, Proestler died, and father and son faced the fast-changing world of food distribution as a team. When William died in 1934, Ray Thoms was experienced in all facets of the business and took over active management. Thoms-Proestler Company became the firm's new name in 1953.

Raymond Carl Thoms was involved in other aspects of civic life, including the development of Sunset Marina in Rock Island. He also served as a member of the Rock Island Rotary, Lindsay Park Boat Club, and was a charter member of the Davenport Club.

He lived in the house until he died at the age of 88 in 1987. Marea Thoms died earlier in 1977. Occupants of the house now are Phillip and Luray Kendall; Mrs. Kendall is the daughter of Raymond and Marea Thoms.

16. State Police District Seven Headquarters
1510 46th Avenue

1942

This irregular shaped, one story buff brick building demonstrates the influence of the Art Moderne style with its spare decorative elements and glass block windows. The central part of the main elevation has a band of nine windows. The westernmost section of the building is stepped down slightly from the center section and has a curved glass block section, in the center of which is the main entry to the building. Over the entry is a curved metal canopy. The east wing of the facade has a series of four narrow bands of glass block windows divided by off-white marble panels, over which there are small light fixtures.

On the south side are a series of seven glass block windows, two large square shaped openings, with the other five having narrow horizontal shapes. The four long bands of glass block windows on the easternmost wing mirror those on the front of the building. On the side of the garage wing of the building there are two large openings with metal framed windows. The metal entry door in this elevation has a curved metal canopy.

Eric Wala

All of the windows in the building, with the exception of those containing glass blocks were retrofitted with contemporary dark metal framed sash in 1991.

In 1940-41, the Illinois Department of Public Works and Buildings deeded a small portion of land at the western edge of Black Hawk State Park to the Illinois State Police for the purpose of building a new district headquarters. Constructed in 1942, the buff brick building served as headquarters for the Illinois State Police, District Seven, for the next 40 years.

In 1983, the property was transferred back to the Illinois Department of Conservation and the structure became the main office building for Black Hawk State Historic Site. In 1986, the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency assumed administrative control of the site.

Eric Wala

17. Cherry House
1235 42nd Avenue

In 1937 Maurice and Lola Cherry purchased land at 1235 42nd Avenue in Rock Island's Hill Crest neighborhood for $1,500. Mr. Cherry was a prominent Rock Island auto dealer, and established the Cherry Motor Company in 1935 after relocating from Champaign, Illinois. He operated the business at 1612 3rd Avenue until his retirement and sale of the dealership in 1956 to Gard Pontiac-Cadillac, which later became Horst-Zimmerman Motors.

The Cherrys hired notable Rock Island architect Rudolph Sandberg to design the home, and plans were completed in 1939. The Art Moderne style house incorporated unique construction methods which included concrete block exterior walls accentuated in decorative patterns, metal sash casement windows, glass block, and a projecting reinforced concrete slab over the front entry. Interior walls were of plaster on structural clay tile, and the floor and ceiling structures were Sandberg's patented "Girderless Ribbed Slab System." This structural system consisted of a series of "U" shaped 8" x 8" clay tiles in which reinforcing bars and concrete were placed. The resulting floor structure measured only seven inches in thickness. Rudolph Sandberg also designed the ornamental terra cotta work on the Fort Theatre (see number 11) and the Illinois Oil Company Building (see number 13).

Jill Doak

Construction of the Cherry House was completed in 1940, a year which saw more than 200 houses started as Rock Island entered a big building boom. A new all-time record in the greater Tri-City area was set with 1,009 new houses, "shattering by 23 percent the figures for the famous boom year of 1929," according to *The Rock Island Argus*.

In 1965 Maurice Cherry died, but Lola remained in the house through 1972. This two story frame hip roofed residence displays aspects of the Art Moderne style, with its streamlined appearance, metal framed windows continuous around the corners, and the use of glass block. The irregular shaped house has a projecting two story wing on front that includes a two car garage at the lowest level, with a plain wall above. There was a deck above the garage originally, which was removed when a bedroom was built in this location in 1975. The original concrete block walls, which had ceramic tile accent panels, were refaced in 1975 with vertical wood siding. To the right of the garage wing is the main entry door. On the corner of the facade are wrap around, metal framed casement windows, as well as section of glass block at the upper level. Glass blocks also appear on one side of the front door.

On the rear elevation there is a half-circle shaped bay window holding three pairs of metal-framed casement windows. A screened porch on the east side was enclosed in the mid-1970s. In addition to these changes and the application of vertical wood siding, a gable roofed wing has been added to the rear of the garage.

The flat planes and fenestration on the house also reflect the contemporaneous International style, in which decorative detailing was reduced to a minimum.

Eric Wala

18. Rock Island High School
1401 25th Avenue

1937

The visionary choice of this important bluff-top site for the high school could almost have been forecast in 1929, when construction on the stadium at the east end of the campus was begun. The 1930s were a busy time for school building in Rock Island, and, in the middle of the decade, the Works Progress Administration allowed the school board to build a new high school. Additional land to the west of the stadium was purchased, drawings were made, and excavation was begun in 1936. Construction went rapidly and, as the Yankees and the Giants were opening the World Series in Yankee Stadium on October 6, 1937, the new school was being dedicated.

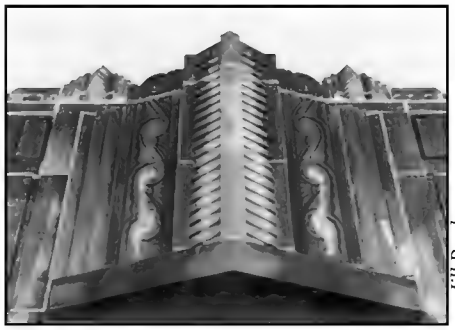
Although local architect Benj. A. Horn is the architect of record, at least two other architects had significant artistic involvement. Chris Maiwald, who was unlicensed at the time and worked for Horn, reportedly did much of the design work on the high school. Maiwald had worked for Horn since the early 1930s. A rendering of the school is signed by him. Maiwald later went into practice for himself in Rock Island. Additionally, a set of drawings signed by St. Louis architect William B. Ittner, an accomplished Deco style designer, also exists. Rock Islander Ben Gest was the structural engineer for the project. Since the National Guard Armory, the high school, as well as a Horn-designed high school in Reynolds, Illinois, were all completed about the same time, the sharing of design work seems realistic since Horn did not have any partners in his practice at this time.

In the original plan, the school was U-shaped, embracing the top of the bluff, and presenting the river a facade nearly as impressive as the east-facing front facade. Later additions to both arms of the U were also designed by Horn. The south wing, built in 1958, contained a field house, swimming pool, and, unusual for the era, an elevator. A decade later, more classrooms were added on the north wing, and a concourse linking the two wings was established. While the concourse does detract from the river view of the school, these additions have kept the school as functional to the community today as when it was built.

Eric Wala

The Art Deco styled Rock Island High School is a very large, irregular shaped two and three story buff brick and stone complex, with a flat roof. The long central part of the main facade is flanked by the gymnasium wing on the south and the auditorium on the north. Art Deco features of the school complex include the vertical emphasis provided by the brick piers that frame the window panels, the curving edge of the parapet wall, exterior vertical fluting, and the massive Egyptian temple-like treatment of the gymnasium and auditorium facades.

The wide central section of the high school is symmetrically arranged, as are the two major wings that flank it. The central part of the main facade contains three pairs of entry doors with divided glass transoms, above which are vertical rows of small paned metal framed windows. Above these windows is the name of the school in applied stone letters. The treatment of the design of the aluminum framing around the center pair of entry doors deserves special note. Over the doors there is a tall aluminum design feature with vertical fluting. It rises to a peak in the center, reminding one of a city skyline. On each side of the center pair of doors are tall aluminum lanterns with vertically ribbed glass panels. The vertical emphasis is carried on down through fluted sections in the metal panels on either side of the doors. These vertical fluted panels also extend upward for two stories.


Jill Doak

Aluminum as an architectural material reached its aesthetic peak in the Art Deco years. Where previously bronze, brass or cast iron was used ornamentally and structurally in architecture, the 1920s and

Eric Wala

1930s emphasized the beauty of "white" metals - generally aluminum or stainless steel (silvery chromium plate was a common finish on small artifacts). Aluminum was considered as precious as silver in the 1890s, when it first became available for use. Because it is refined electrolytically from its ore, the metal could not be made in quantity until electrical power was available.

On either side of the three story entry element are slightly projecting sections with rows of three tall 12 light windows at each level. Above the third floor windows there is fluting that curves into the coping on the cornice. The main face of the wall behind the projecting sections is set back from the sides of this building element to provide more vertical emphasis. On either side of the central entry part of the facade, there are five vertical panels of windows, three in each panel, each with 12 lights. The panels are framed by saw-toothed brick piers. Additional vertical emphasis is provided by the fluting on the spandrels at the upper two levels of the building.

Jill Doak

The gymnasium and auditorium wings are similar in design, each with three part entry doors with divided glass transoms. Dividing the paired entry doors are massive round stone columns. Surrounding the entire entry elements are fluted stone frames. The entrances to the gymnasium and auditorium are reached from a wide set of steps with low risers. Above the entries in both wings are a series of metal framed, small paned windows, the ones on the front of the auditorium being much taller than those on the front of the gymnasium. On either side of the entries to these wings are wide vertical fluted panels that extend upward, curving into the parapet wall which steps back where the footprint of the building changes.

Jill Doak

The other wings and sections of the high school display a similar design treatment as those used on the main facade. Also, the 50 foot high exhaust stack is carefully designed to reflect the Art Deco style with its stepped back vertical emphasis, highlighted by vertical fluting in the top section.

The design of the interior of the high school building is fairly utilitarian. However, there are Art Deco touches in the vestibule, lobby, large auditorium and especially the "Little Theater" on the north side. The vestibule has a vaulted ceiling and arched marble end walls with large recesses. Deco touches are added by way of the tall metal and frosted glass chandeliers, and terrazzo floor with circle and star motifs. The lobby picks up the Deco feeling with its tray ceiling with stepped moldings around the edges, the four Deco style metal and frosted glass chandeliers, and marble walls with vertical lines in the surface.

The Deco touches in the 900 seat auditorium include vertical fluting on the side walls in the balcony area, a stepped back design in the plastered part of the ceiling, and decorative cast iron railings on each side of the stage and on the stairs leading to the main floor of the auditorium. Also, the walls of the lower part of the auditorium have walnut veneer with horizontal banding and curved corners at the entrances.

Those entering the small lobby of the Little Theater are immediately treated to its Art Deco features, including a rounded, streamlined ticket booth with its metal banding and original circular glass center section. The bluish green lobby walls are trimmed with shiny horizontal stainless steel bands to help continue the streamlined feeling. Hanging from the ceiling are two long metal and frosted glass chandeliers, in the Deco style.

As one enters the 150 seat theater, the eyes are immediately treated to the curving shapes and metal banding that evokes the modernistic forms of the Deco era. The curving, bluish green walls are stucco above and covered with a striated linoleum- type material below. Emphasizing the curves are a series of shiny horizontal stainless steel bands that help direct the eye up to the stage. Other nice Deco touches are the metal ends of the rows of seats, which feature a sun ray effect rendered in black with shiny metal rays. And even the ceiling adds to the Deco feeling with its striped and silver patterned ceiling coverings that compliment the theater's other Deco features, including the vertical fluting on the exit doors and original wall light fixtures, which combine aluminum and glass in a Deco style.

Eric Wala

19. Apartment Building
1536 21st Avenue

1938

This 2 ½ story, square shaped multi-colored brick apartment building displays its Art Deco design features along the cornice across the facade and in the stone trim around the door and windows, which display a stepped design. Also Deco in style is the vertical fluting and beaded molding on either side of the front door side lights.

The central vertical section of the three bay facade projects slightly from the main face of the wall. It contains the main entry door with divided glass side lights. Above the doorway at the second level is a pair of tall leaded glass windows with an intricate design that appears to have been influenced by designs of Louis Sullivan or Frank Lloyd Wright. On each side of the central vertical section of the facade, there are bands of three 6/1 double-hung windows at each of the levels of the building. The front facade is crowned with a stone cornice with molded designs that include fluting, circles and octagons.

Jill Doak

The treatment of the other elevations on the apartment building are very simple, with single and paired 6/1 double-hung windows with stone sills. The only basic change to the building appears to have been the addition of a frame, two story wing on the rear.

These apartments were built in 1938 for entrepreneur David Ruben. The six-apartment structure was built by Weisman Construction. This firm constructed many other buildings in the city, including the $250,000 Long View Apartment Building at 18th Avenue and 17th Street in 1927, and the Centennial Bridge Commission Building (see number 3), and the Weisman Apartments in the 1300 block of 20th Street.

With his outstanding carpentry skills and entrepreneurial spirit, Sam Weisman flourished to become one of Rock Island's most respected building contractors. Weisman was born in Berlin, Germany in 1881, where his parents operated a store. After his father's death, he moved to Russia with his mother. Unhappily, she was killed in an anti-Semitic outbreak and he began working as a railroad carpenter at age 14. He came to the United States in 1903, and worked as a carpenter on the East Coast for a few years while he learned the language. In 1912, he came to Rock Island , and worked for other contractors. Only six months later, he entered into business for himself.

Residents of this building have represented many occupations over the years: Rock Island High School teachers, chemist; optical lab manager; clothing store owner; tavern owner; sales manager of a book concern; Arsenal workers; registered nurse; assistant state's attorney. Many widows and retirees have also resided in the apartments.

The building is currently known as Fluegel Apartments. The exterior structure does not appear to have changed over the years.

Jill Doak

20. Rock Island Sewage Treatment Plant
1299 Mill Street

1940

Based on an Art Deco design by architect Benj. A. Horn, the Rock Island Sewage Treatment Plant was built in 1940. Consoer, Townsend & Quinlan, a Chicago engineering firm also worked on the project. The one and two story, orange brick and stone complex has flat roofs. Included in the complex are the two story Service Building, a one story Pumping Station, and a one story Sludge Digester facility across the driveway from the other buildings. The rectangular shaped Service Building and Pumping Station were connected by a narrow, one story corridor, which was widened in 1971 to provide for an employee's break room. A two story extension has also been added to the south side of the Service Building.

The facade of the Service Building, Pumping Station and connecting wing all have a vertical emphasis through the use of brick pilasters with beveled stone caps. Between the brick pilasters are metal framed, multi-light windows. The parapet walls on the Service Building and Pumping Station are irregular in shape with wide stone, tower-like features at the corners of the buildings with vertical fluting as the main decoration. On the connecting wing between the Service Building and the Pumping Station, the stone capped pilasters stop short of the cornice, which is finished off with a horizontal stone cap.

Jill Doak

The irregular shaped, one story Sludge Digester building displays decorative elements that echo those found on the other buildings in the complex, including stone capped brick pilasters, with fluting designs in the stone insets at the top. There are two circular wings on this facility, one on either side of a rectangular section with angled corners. There is a recessed section in the center of the facade of the Sludge Digester building that contains the main doorway. Rising above the cornice in the center of the facade is stonework containing the vertical fluting design found on other buildings in the complex. The metal framed windows in the center section of the Sludge Digester building are long and narrow, with multi-paned glass.

With the exception of the newer two story wing on the Service Building, and widening of the connecting hallway between the Service Building and Pumping Station, the 1940 Deco design is basically intact.

For three days in the second week of July 10, 1940, the City of Rock Island celebrated completion of the two biggest public works projects in the history of the city: the Centennial Bridge (see number 4) and the $3,000,000 comprehensive sewer upgrade. While the biggest financial portion of the sewer upgrade was the laying of 35 miles of sewer pipe, the most visible part of the project was the completion of the sewage treatment plant. The sewer project alone warranted its own celebration at the site of the plant. The speaker at the dedication ceremony on July 11, 1940 was Thomas G. Reid of the finance section of the regional office of the Public Works Administration in Chicago. Other speakers included officials from the Illinois Department of Public Health, the consulting engineering firm and representatives from the St. Paul, Minnesota sewage disposal plant. Mayor Robert P. Galbraith served as master of ceremonies and the plant was

Eric Wala

open to the public for tours.

The sewer project was 45% funded by the Public Works Administration. Since it was such a massive project, the PWA assigned a resident engineer inspector, John Ward, Jr., to be on the job daily for nearly two years. The consulting engineers took advantage of the newest technology in the treatment plant, including magnetite filters, which were very new in 1940 and were used to further eliminate impurities before discharge into the Mississippi River. The 117 foot tall smoke stack on the incinerator building contains fire brick capable of withstanding temperatures of 2,768 degrees Fahrenheit. The pumping station and service building have a structural steel frame, in addition to brick walls and concrete floor and roof. The interior walls were glazed brick, which was considered easy to wash and maintain. The many pipes in the plant are painted in coded colors, and originally twelve different colors were used. The plant is also built at a higher elevation to protect it from Mississippi River flooding; in 1940 it was built four feet above the highest known flood stage to that date. In all, the plant cost $500,000 to construct, and was built by the Ben K. Stilfield Construction Company of Rock Island.

During construction in 1940.

GLOSSARY

Art Nouveau - a decorative style of late 19th century origin characterized by sinuous lines and foliate forms.

Asymmetrical - an unbalanced spacial arrangement; an uneven spacing of windows and/or door(s) on a facade.

Balustrade - a row of balusters topped by a rail; a low railing at a roof level or on a porch.

Barrel vault - a vault shaped-like half of a cylinder.

Bas relief - sculpture in which figures are carved in a flat surface so that they project only a little from the background.

Bay - a vertical section of a building's facade or elevation.

Belt course - a horizontal band, often of stone, that extends across a building's facade, sometimes used at the window sill level.

Capital - the uppermost member of a column or pilaster.

Casement window - a window that opens on hinges along the side; a casement window often has two frames, opening like French doors.

Coffer - a recessed panel in a ceiling.

Colonnettes - decorative, small columns, usually displayed in a bunch.

Coping - the top layer of a masonry wall.

Cornice - a horizontal molding projecting along the top part of a wall or building.

Cubism - a style of art that stressed abstract structure at the expense of other pictorial elements by displaying several aspects of the same object simultaneously and by fragmenting the form of depicted objects.

Dentil - any of a series of small rectangular blocks projecting like teeth, as from under a cornice.

Elevation - the front, rear or side of a building.

English basement - a basement raised approximately one half story above grade.

Facade - the front or a principal face of a building.

Faience - earthenware pottery or tile decorated with an opaque glaze.

Fenestration - the arrangement of windows and doors in the face of a building.

Filigreed - a delicate, lace-like ornamental work of intertwined metal or wire.

Finial - a decorative terminal piece at the top of an architectural element such as a newel post, balustrade, door or window head, etc.

Fluted - having long, rounded or v-shaped grooves.

Gothic (Neo-Gothic) - an architectural style, characterized by pointed arches and vaulting, reflecting the influence of medieval Gothic architecture.

Grille - an open grating of wrought iron, bronze, etc. forming a screen to a door or window.

International Style - an architectural style developed by European architects between the two World Wars that emphasized radically new designs. The style was noted for flat roofs without a coping at the roof line, metal casement windows set flush with the outer wall, smooth unornamented wall surfaces with no decorative detailing at doors or windows, and an asymmetrical facade.

Keystone - the wedge-shaped piece at the crown of an arch or in a cornice that locks the other pieces in place.

Mansard roof - a roof with two slopes on each of the four sides, the lower steeper than the upper, or the upper part may be flat.

Parapet - the part of a building's exterior wall that extends up beyond the roof edge (most often on flat or semi-flat roofed buildings).

Pediment - a triangular space forming the gable of a low pitched roof on a building or over an entryway; a triangular shaped window hood.

Pier - the part of a wall between windows or other openings built out from the surface of the wall.

Pilaster - a rectangular support or pier projecting partially from a wall.

Plinth - the square block at the base of a column.

Polychrome - decorated in several colors.

Proscenium - the part of a stage in front of the curtain that separates the stage from the auditorium and provides the arch that frames it.

Spandrel - the area under a window and a window head line below it, or the area between the sill of a window and the foundation of a building or grade.

Stringer - a long piece of metal (or wood) that is used as support; a horizontal structural member connecting upright structural members.

Symmetrical - an even spacing of openings in a building wall, with the same pattern exhibited on each side of a vertical line in the center of the wall face.

Terra cotta - a high-fired, glazed or unglazed earthenware used for sculpture, building facing, architectural ornamentation, etc.

Terrazzo - a mosaic flooring consisting of small pieces of marble or granite set in concrete, ground down then polished.

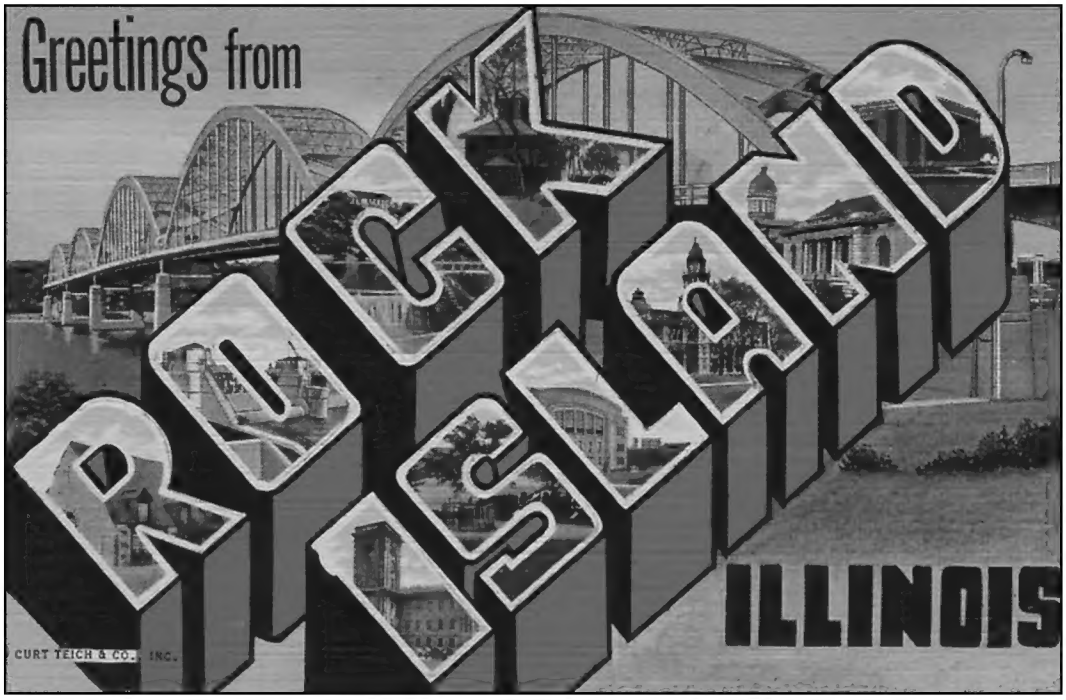
Tripartite - divided into three sections.

Tympanum - the recessed space, usually triangular, enclosed by the slanting cornices of a pediment, often ornamented with sculpture.

Wainscoting - the lower part of an interior wall finished differently from the remainder of the wall.

Wiener Werkstatte - Guild workshops founded by Josef Hoffman in Vienna; a series of well equipped studios in which artist members could learn and practice the various crafts in conjunction with specialized craftsmen or on their own, and in which various crafts could be coordinated.

Ziggurat - a design featuring step back insets that lead to a higher point, a zigzag effect.



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